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VIRAHA-BHAKTI
THE EARLY HISTORY OF KṚṢṆA DEVOTION IN SOUTH INDIA

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VIRAHA-BHAKTI

The early history of Kṛṣṇa devotion in South India

FRIEDHELM HARDY

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ILLUSTRATIONS

The illustrations are drawn by Jo Dennis (Ian Dennis & Associates, Reading) from photographs taken by the author in South India in 1975.

1 Relief in the *Govardhanadharaṇa*-Cave at Mahābalipuram near Madras. Pallava style, middle of the seventh century A.D. Kṛṣṇa is holding the mountain up like an umbrella, and the normal life in the herdsmen's station can continue in spite of the heavy rains sent by Indra.

facing page 196

2 The twelve Āḻvārs, from individual bronze figures. Commonly found iconographic characteristics of the Āḻvārs are as follows: four Early Āḻvārs (of low caste according to hagiography) with hair in a large bun and loin-cloth; Periyâḻvār with cymbals; Toṇṭar° with a flower-basket on his left arm; Pāṇ with a lute; Parakālaṉ with sword and shield; Āṇṭāḷ (the only girl) with a lotus in her right hand; Kulaśekhara with a crown; Nammāḻvār (seated) with a manuscript in his left hand, and the right hand in *upadeśamudrā*.

facing page 250

3 *Mūla-* (in the *bhujâṅgaśāyana* position) and *utsava-vigrahas* of Viṣṇu (and Lakṣmī on his right, Bhūmi on his left) in the Kavittalam temple, north of Papanasham, near Kumbhakonam. In the foreground, a *pūjā* tray and a *caṭakōpam*.

facing page 288

4 The *vastraharaṇa*-episode (see BhP X, Chapter 22). Relief on a *maṇḍapam*-pillar in the VaradarājapPerumāḷ temple, Kāñcīpuram.

facing page 500

MAPS

(Between pages 256 and 257)

1 The geographical distribution of all ninety-six temples referred to by the Āḻvārs, the region covered by the poems of the Āḻvārs (– – – –), and the ancient division (═══════) of Tamil Nadu. The figures refer to the number of temples traditionally listed for each district. The borders of modern States are shown by an unbroken line (————————).

2 Temples mentioned in the four *Early Antâtis*.

3 Temples mentioned by Nammāḻvār.

4 Geographical distribution of temples mentioned by Tirumaṅkai-Āḻvār.

5 The distribution and frequency of *tirumoḻis* dedicated to temples in Tirumaṅkai's *Periya-Tirumoḻi*.

6 Temples mentioned by later Āḻvārs.

Preface

This book has grown over fourteen years—probably too long a period, *pace* vintage wine. The original idea for it was conceived some time in 1968, and 1976 saw its first fruit as a D. Phil. thesis for the University of Oxford. A slightly modified manuscript was sent to the press in 1978, and this is effectively the cut-off date for the literature discussed here.

Fourteen years are too long, because changes in my approach and direction have resulted less in a uniform whole than in a pastiche which can now be read from a variety of angles. At the beginning stood indeed a historical interest: to write up the *gopī* myths in their developments, somewhat along the lines of Hacker's *Prahlāda* (a work that meanwhile has triggered off a series of similar studies in Germany). But soon the *Bhāgavata-Purāṇa* emerged as the great mystery which, in turn, pointed me towards the fascinating world of the Āḻvārs. (For some years now these Tamil poets have attracted the attention of others too. A. K. Ramanujan's attractive anthology of Nammāḻvār, *Hymns for the Drowning*, appeared early this year; L. Ate wrote a thesis for the University of Wisconsin on Periyâḻvār in 1978; and Arokiyasami is preparing a French translation of the three early Āḻvārs. These and other recent studies came to my notice too late to be taken into consideration for the present book.) Moreover, the ordering of my sources drew me increasingly into reflections on 'methodology' or, as I would prefer to call it, on developing a model for the extremely complex interactions of various traditions, milieux, value-systems and modes of discourse which together constitute Indian culture. This theme has remained in the background of publications of mine since 1977, and will be discussed more fully in my 'From the "illness of love" to "social hermeneutics"' (to appear in vol. 3 of *Contributions to South Asian Studies*, ed. Gopal Krishna, Oxford University Press, Delhi). Here, fortunately, fourteen years have not led me to fundamentally different views from those implied in the following pages (although today I would use 'normative ideology' with greater caution). Since 1973 I have been working in a British 'Religious Studies' environment. Resisting the urge to become polemical, I want to say only this: if the following pages do not read like

traditional Oriental Studies (or *Indologie*), the reason for this would lie in my reaction to that environment, absorbing and rejecting its stimuli, ambitions and pretensions. A final angle is implied, namely, that of cultural encounter and transformation. *Viraha-bhakti* reflects—and enabled—the meeting of the Tamil South with the North, and the light it can throw on man's imaginative and emotive potentials (in the context of economic, political, ideological and 'developmental' forces) may well possess a certain actuality in view of innumerable contemporary parallels.

During the last fourteen years the number of persons and institutions who have offered me their assistance, friendship and encouragement has grown continuously, and I find it difficult to do justice here to all of them and to all they have done for me. Prof. R. C. Zaehner was my supervisor for the original thesis till 1974, when his sudden death put an abrupt end to the many sessions of sympathetic discussion I had with him. From that date Prof. R. Gombrich became my supervisor, encouraging me and putting great effort into the improvement of my terse Anglo-Teutonic Maṇipravāḷa; unfortunately, not all my later alterations and additions have had the benefit of his meticulous eye. Due to his initiative, the present study came to be included in the Oxford University South Asian Studies Series. I would like to express here my appreciation of all those years I have known him. Prof. T. Burrow and Dr S. Gupta made valuable comments which I was pleased to incorporate in the following pages. Gopālacakravartī Aiyaṅkār (Triplicane, Madras) initiated me into the complexities of Tamil and Maṇipravāḷa, and became a close friend. I am sure he would be most pleased, if the present work were to assist others in discovering the world of South Indian Vaiṣṇavism which he opened up for me. Profs. E. Frauwallner and P. Hacker, The Rev. G. Mühlenbrock SJ, Drs N. Klaes, K. Falkenberg, L. Siegel and Nazir Ali Jairazbhoy may be singled out here for their decisive influence on my work as former teachers, scholars and friends. Prof. C. Vaudeville, Drs K. Zvelebil, S. Jānakī, H. Kulke, S. Srinivasan and K. K. A. Vēkatâcārī corresponded with me on various points of detail and generously gave me their advice. That in spite of all this help, encouragement and guidance this book has not become more accurate, more readable and more inspiring than it is has to remain my own responsibility.

I would like to take this opportunity to express my gratitude also

to the following institutions which through their generous grants and scholarships at various stages have enabled me to study at Oxford and carry out my research. Such thanks are due to the Direktor des Landschaftsverbandes Rheinland in Cologne who showed much understanding when I expressed in 1966 a wish to study in England; to the Trustees of the Max Müller Memorial Fund; of the Boden Fund (whose Sanskrit Scholarship I was awarded between 1969 and 1973); and to K. D. D. Henderson, C. M. G., Secretary to the Spalding Trust which subsidized my year's stay in Madras between 1971 and 1972.

I also wish to thank all those colleagues of mine at King's College, University of London, where I have been teaching since 1973, particularly Prof. E. G. Parrinder, who helped me to overcome perhaps the greatest obstacle I encountered in completing the present work. G. S. A. Selvaraj and his colleagues who photoset the text, and R. Parthasarathy who looked after it as editor owe my gratitude for completing so well a task which must have been surely a daunting one.

Since Germaine Greer the customary final paragraph in any acknowledgement has become a problematic matter. Fortunately, my wife Aruna has not done any typing of the manuscript, nor did she check the references or compile the index. I am not even sure that she has been very patient during these years while I have been indulging in the Kṛṣṇa *bhaktas* and the *gopīs*. Yet she has enjoyed hearing about it and has brought useful criticism to bear on many issues. Thus perhaps the best way of thanking her is for being what she is.

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King's College
University of London
21 April 1982

TRANSLITERATION

Passages in **Sanskrit** have been transliterated according to the system commonly used. In compounds, individual members are separated by hyphens or, in case of vowel *sandhi*, indicated by ^.

In **Prakrit** and **Apabhraṃśa** passages, the following symbols have occasionally been used: ‘ to mark the half line of an **āryā**; ˳ to indicate fusion of vowels without causing a long vowel; and ̃ (above vowels and *v*) to show (metrically short) nasalization.

Tamil letters are transliterated according to the system used in the MTL (also by Beythan and the DED); but note that l̲ stands for ழ and h̲ for ஃ. Elided super-short final *u* is indicated by ’. Sentences have been cut up into their word components and not into metrical units (thus: *viḻu ccīr antaṇar*; and not the purely metrical *viḻuccī rantaṇar*). As the degree to which the complicated rules of Tamil *sandhi* are applied in individual sources varies, no attempt has been made to introduce a normative system here. (For typographical reasons it has been possible only in the minority of cases to mark the *sandhi* consonants *v* and *y* by raising them above the line, and to draw attention to other forms of consonant *sandhi* through the sign ˳, e.g. *vā˳n̲āṭu* for *vān̲+nāṭu*).

In the occasional **Maṇipravāḷa** passage, Sanskrit elements are transliterated in their correct Sanskrit form and placed within brackets: *(Vedârtha)ṅkaḷil*, not: *Vētārttaṅkaḷil*.

PART ONE

General Introduction

1.1 The phenomenon

His thin voice rose, and gave out one sound after another. At times there seemed rhythm, at times there was the illusion of a Western melody. But the ear, baffled repeatedly, soon lost any clue, and wandered in a maze of noises, none harsh or unpleasant, none intelligible. It was the song of an unknown bird.

E. M. Forster's[1] impressions of classical Hindustānī music could without difficulty be applied to other 'unknown, unintelligible birds' found in India, for instance Hinduism. While the Western ear hunts for recognizable melodies, familiar rhythms, and harmony, it fails to penetrate into the underlying structure from which each note derives its significance and by which beauty has to be measured.

Only the servants understood it. They began to whisper to one another. The man who was gathering water chestnut came naked out of the tank, his lips parted with delight, disclosing his scarlet tongue.[2]

Fielding, who lacks this understanding, asks the most primal of all questions: 'What was that?' Godbole's reply avoids the musical side and turns to the literary content of the song which he can paraphrase:

'I will explain in detail. It was a religious song. I placed myself in the position of a milkmaiden. I say to Shri Krishna, "Come! come to me only." The god refuses to come. I grow humble and say: "Do not come to me only. Multiply yourself into a hundred Krishnas, and let one go to each of my hundred companions, but one, O Lord of the Universe, come to me." He refuses to come. This is repeated several times.'

Mrs Moore, sensing the tragic undercurrent in the song's sentiments, hesitates to yield to it. '"But he comes in some other song, I hope?" said Mrs Moore gently.' But no such easy way out exists.

[1] 1965, p. 77.
[2] Ibid., p. 78.

'Oh, no, he refuses to come,' repeated Godbole, perhaps not understanding her question. 'I say to him, Come, come, come, come, come, come. He neglects to come.'

It would have been so much easier, if Kṛṣṇa came 'in some other song'. We do not know what Mrs Moore felt; perhaps she found comfort in the servants' appreciation of the song despite these sad undercurrents. As it happened, during her stay in India she did not meet anyone like Caitanya, for whom Kṛṣṇa's refusal to come is a dilemma that affects his whole existence. Meeting Godbole, she came in touch with the culturally mollified surface of a phenomenon that once was an all-absorbing religious passion. Today another Mrs Smith, by simply switching on her radio, might to her great surprise hear the Shankar family sing — with heavy Indian accent but in the style of modern pop music — 'I am missing you, Kṛṣṇa! Where are you?...' (or something similar).[3] We have here vestiges of the same phenomenon, kitschified to appeal to the commercially strong Indian community in Britain.

However, let us turn to Caitanya:

> At first he went as fast as the wind, then suddenly he turned into a pillar, paralysed and unable to move. The flesh around the roots of his hair swelled like boils, and his hair stood on end all over his body. Sweat was dripping from his hair like blood. Unable to speak, his throat emitted gurgling sounds. His eyes filled with tears; his body turned pallid like a white conch. He began to shake, and shivering and trembling fell down on the ground.[4]

The disciples of Caitanya who witnessed similar scenes almost every day during the last years of his life (he died in 1533), did not discard it as epilepsy nor did they regard it as the tragic collapse of their master's faculties Kavirāj, the last biographer of Caitanya, states in a lapidary manner:

> Outside it looked like a poisonous inflammation, but inside it was the fulness of bliss; this is the amazing character of the love of Kṛṣṇa.[5]

He tries to explain this contradictory nature by a simile:

> Tasting that love, like chewing hot sugar-cane, burns the mouth, but one cannot resist doing so. Once the heart is filled with that love, you realize its power: that of poison and nectar mixed together.[6]

[3] AMLH 22002.
[4] *Caitanya-caritâmṛta Antya* 14, 91-6 (abbreviated).
[5] Ibid., *Madhya* 2, 50b.
[6] Ibid., 51.

One day Caitanya is sitting in a state of desolation, writing with his fingers in the sand and lamenting: 'Where are the banks of the Yamunā! Where is the Lord who infatuates even the god of Love himself!'[7] Kavirāj continues:

Different emotions arose in him, and agitation caught his heart. He was unable even to groan as dumb people do. Consumed by the fire of loneliness, his self-composure went tossing up and down. [Then he recited the following poem:[8]]

'How can I pass these wretched nights,
O Kṛṣṇa! without seeing you! . . .'[9]

'You are my wealth, my life: show yourself to me again!' Paralysed and then shaking, sweating and turning pallid, he wept and uttered indistinct sounds. His body hair stood on end, he laughed, wept, danced about and sang. He jumped up and ran about, the next moment to fall on the ground and lose consciousness.[10]

One is reminded by this series of strange physical acts and emotional symptoms of the equally baffling series of notes Godbole sang. We must, however, extend the range of our observation before we can try to speak of an underlying structure that might coordinate these mad bits and pieces. Let me quote from another author.

My friends!
My mother!
Are they a pair of deaths
devouring the heart of a girl?
I do not know.
Or are they the eyes of Kṛṣṇa?
I do not know.
See! Like lotuses opening everywhere,
my gaze cannot avoid them.
I cannot find sleep.
What can I do!

Is it a flashing lightning
that radiates everywhere
with golden splendour?

[7] Ibid., 55f.
[8] The stanza is *Kṛṣṇakarṇâmṛta* I, 41.
[9] *Caitanya-caritâmṛta Madhya* 2, 57f.
[10] Ibid., 71b, 72.

Or is it a fine pearl
that hurts my heart?
I do not know.
The smile of Kṛṣṇa hurts my heart.
My mother!
I know no place to protect me from it.[11]

In these two stanzas of a song by Nammāḻvār the poet imagines what happens when out there in the realm of poetic imagination a girl meets Kṛṣṇa. She will be enraptured by his beauty, then haunted by it. Wherever she looks, she cannot see anything else, nowhere can she flee from it, and not even sleep is available to her as a means of escape. The impression is so strong that it transcends her understanding, paralyses her actions and goes beyond her emotional control. Her self seems to explode into Kṛṣṇa — and yet that cannot happen, for Kṛṣṇa is not there.

I think it is not difficult to see that this song is close to the spiritual world of Caitanya. This in itself should prevent us from too hastily discarding that mystic's behaviour as — simply — epileptic. However the affinity in spirit obscures the fact that the poet of the song lived about eight hundred years earlier and about two thousand kilometres away from Bengal, in southern India. Moreover, many further illustrations of the same religious phenomenon can be given for the whole intervening period. Thus Godbole, Caitanya and Nammāḻvār exemplify one component of the Hindu religious tradition.

1.2 The structuring of the phenomenon

Godbole's music was baffling, because the ear could only perceive individual sounds, while the mind was unable to grasp the structural principles that determined the overall coherence. Before we try now to envisage such an overall structure for the religious phenomenon that has been introduced, we may simply list and describe the individual elements encountered so far.

There is Kṛṣṇa, 'the Lord of the Universe', 'who infatuates even the god of Love himself'. He is the central figure, that means God, in one major branch of Hinduism. Besides Kṛṣṇaism, Vaiṣṇavism (in which Kṛṣṇa figures only as an *avatāra* of Viṣṇu),

[11] *Tiruvāymoḻi* VII, 7, 1 and 5.

Śaivism, the cults of Rāma, and the religions concerned with the Goddess, constitute the theistic traditions of Hinduism. The religious phenomenon outlined above is typical only of Kṛṣṇa religion, and though found also in the other theistic streams, its roots are exclusively in Kṛṣṇaism.

Then there is the figure of the 'milkmaiden', the *gopī*. Along with the phrase 'the banks of the Yamunā', a whole range of Kṛṣṇa myths is evoked. Kṛṣṇa, spending his youth among the cowherds of Vṛndāvana, enjoys with their girls (and wives) all the pleasures of love; but then he abandons the *gopīs* to go to Mathurā, never to return. In Godbole's 'come, come, come, come' we hear the *gopīs* lament after his departure for Mathurā.

Nammāḻvār's song introduces us to the figure of the girl. She does not belong to the realm of myth, but to that other cosmos of fantasy and imagination, love poetry. India produced a range of stereotyped inhabitants of this realm, the girl and her lover being obviously the two main figures. Just as Kṛṣṇa is the lover of the *gopīs* in the forest of Vṛndāvana, he moves about in the landscape of poetry and has the girl living there fall in love with him — never to grant her the fulfilment of that love. If we were to analyse the poems and songs which Caitanya is said to have sung, we would find that even there Kṛṣṇa and the *gopīs* are envisaged as if the forests of Vṛndāvana were part of the country of lyrical poetry; they are depicted like lovers in Sanskrit love poetry.

Godbole, Caitanya, and Nammāḻvār belong to the human world, which in many ways is so different from Vṛndāvana or the world of poetry. Caitanya's cry: 'Where are the banks of the Yamunā!' indicates that difference, and the pain it causes in man's heart. 'Without seeing you' reflects the realization that Kṛṣṇa, 'the Lord of the Universe', abides beyond the human realm. Now Godbole makes the remarkable statement: 'I placed myself in the position of a milkmaiden.' This seems to suggest an emotional identification between himself and a *gopī*, a merger of the mythical plane with the personal realm of man, by a man taking on the sentiments of a woman. Nammāḻvār does not tell us so directly, but does he not also do something similar, and place himself in the position of the girl of poetry?

While Godbole seems to remain otherwise cool and unmoved, Caitanya reacts differently. The affective identification with the *gopīs* that penetrates his total awareness, far from managing to

bridge the gulf between Kṛṣṇa and man, confronts him with the *gopīs*' own situation. Like himself, they suffer in 'the fire of loneliness', which in the technical language of poetics is styled *viraha*, separation. The situation of the girl in the realm of poetry is much the same. In Caitanya, these sentiments of 'separation' cause extreme physical reactions — paralysis, swooning, weeping, horripilation and so on — just as the girl cannot find rest or sleep. It has often been pointed out that India is not aware of the tragic (in the Western classical sense); but perhaps nowhere more than here do we in fact approach the tragic, at least empirically speaking. Since Kṛṣṇa has to fulfil a universal rôle that prevents his return to the *gopī*s, there cannot be a happy ending to their suffering. Behind Godbole's 'he neglects to come' stands the agony of a Caitanya.

Frequently we have found poetry and song, music and beauty being mentioned. When passively observed and perceived, as when the girl sees Kṛṣṇa's beauty or Caitanya savours a poem of Vilvamaṅgala, these elements activate and heighten that particular agony styled 'separation'. Thus we could assume that also when they are actively created, when Godbole improvises his song or Nammāḻvār writes his poetry, they serve to heighten that same agony, while initially stimulated by it.

However, there are other factors which appear to run counter to all this. The servants relish Godbole's song; Caitanya's experience is said to be internally nectar and bliss; and even the girl is actually enraptured by Kṛṣṇa's beauty. Indeed we appear to be dealing with an 'amazing' phenomenon full of contradictions and ambiguities. But instead of trying to penetrate this mystery at this stage, it will be better simply to provide an abstract and formalized description of the material discussed so far.

We have already distinguished three separate planes of which the mystic is aware and which condition his emotions. There is first the world of man, the personal awareness. In the following this will frequently be referred to as the *personal*, *experiential*, or the *mystical*, level. As the second plane we have the world of man transfigured into *poetry*; as the third, the realm of *myth*.

Each of these three levels reveals similar elements. We find the same sensuous fascination with beauty: Caitanya longs to meet 'the Lord infatuating even the god of Love himself', and

relishes songs describing his beauty; the *gopīs* are fascinated by his beauty and sing songs about it, and the girl speaks about Kṛṣṇa's beautiful form. This may be called the *aesthetic* element. Usually involved in this experience of Kṛṣṇa's beauty, since it is (either directly, or indirectly through an emotional identification) the fascination felt by a woman for the male Kṛṣṇa, we have a second element, the *erotic*. Finally, aesthetic relish and erotic desire push towards physical expression and, naturally, release. But since the separation remains unresolved, this cannot manifest itself in the otherwise obvious form of sexual union, and this release takes on the form, in the extreme case, of the breakdown of normal behaviour, of everyday awareness, and of 'sanity'. Whether in a *gopī*, the girl or a mystic like Caitanya, the reactions are similar: paralysis, swooning, sleeplessness and so on. In order not to prejudice our investigation from the beginning, a value-neutral and merely descriptive, but not interpretative, label for these symptoms has to be chosen; I shall call it the *ecstatic* (in the sense of I.M. Lewis' study).

The phenomenon, which in this manner can be structured as consisting of three different levels of awareness and of three basic attitudes or psychological factors, has so far been described entirely in Western terminology. But if one turns to the Indian tradition, no name for our phenomenon can be found that is easily understood by all or most Indians. On the whole, the religious complex described here did not, in its distinctive character, penetrate Indian conceptual awareness. Certainly Caitanya's disciples would have been able to name it (viz., *prīti-rasa*), but that name would not be understood by other groups, or would be understood differently from what those disciples meant by it. Consequently Western scholarship has done little to lay bare the autonomous characteristics of the phenomenon. One way of naming it here would be to use another Western category, 'bridal mysticism', but I have preferred to choose a more neutral title. 'Kṛṣṇa bhakti' would be the term most commonly and universally used in the Indian tradition, but since it also denotes other types of religious attitude, I have qualified it by 'emotional', to exclude, for example, 'intellectual Kṛṣṇa bhakti'. *Viraha-bhakti*, 'devotion in which the sentiment of "separation" is cultivated', is perhaps the nearest Indian title we can find for the type of religion I denote by 'emotional

Kṛṣṇa bhakti'. Objection may be raised to my usage of the word 'Kṛṣṇa' when dealing with the Tamil sources; I shall give my reasons for doing so in the relevant chapters.

To conclude: the religious phenomenon which has been illustrated here will be styled 'emotional Kṛṣṇa bhakti'. Any religious phenomenon which does not include the three planes and all the three elements on each plane — however 'emotional' it may be — will be excluded.

1.3 The phenomenon in history and society: method of approach

So far my characterization of emotional Kṛṣṇa bhakti is nothing more than an abstraction that disregards all historical and sociological, doctrinal and practical manifestations of it, their individual nuances and differences, in the concrete realm of Hinduism. It is an abstract picture that has been designed as a general frame of reference against which I shall examine individual manifestations of emotionalism. For example, it becomes possible to say that a particular mystic has oriented himself predominantly according to mythical symbols (and not poetic ones), or that the expression of his ecstasy has a strongly erotic colouring. In other words, I am trying to establish a number of *objective* criteria which allow for greater nuances than expressions like 'highly emotional' or 'ardently emotional' could provide.

Kṛṣṇa emotionalism in the sense defined here is the end-product of a long process of growth, and many separate factors had to interact in order to give rise to the complete pattern. This obviously does not mean that there was any necessity, any historical teleology, guiding these processes; it means that when we look back in history, the complete structure dissolves into different lines of development. In the light of our definition it becomes possible to trace such lines of influence back to cases that were originally independent of Kṛṣṇaism (for example, *caṅkam* poetry), and it is assumed here that an understanding of these various developments is essential for an understanding of the whole structure.

A full study of emotional Kṛṣṇa bhakti, and of the different lines of development that led up to its first appearance, is clearly impossible to achieve within the confines of the present book. As I shall demonstrate below, particularly the earlier period in

the history of this type of religion has raised tantalizing questions, and thus I shall restrict the present study to that period. This means that I shall explore those individual developments that, when interacting, gave rise to Kṛṣṇa emotionalism in the sense defined here — in the bhakti of the South Indian Āḻvārs. Still remaining in basically the same milieu, certain aspects of the Sanskrit *Bhāgavata-Purāṇa* will be investigated; this text was particularly important, because it made the regional religion of the Āḻvārs available for the rest of India and in fact became the basis of almost all further developments of emotionalism in India. In terms of absolute chronology, the period covered runs from the first century A.D. to the tenth century.

Exaggerating somewhat, we can say that traditionally scholars tended to confine themselves to arranging their sources on the single line of chronology, and to describing them as developments from any given point on that line. But some phenomenon in Bengal that happens to be contemporary with other phenomena in Tamil Nadu may have nothing else in common with the latter. Or what about two people living next door to each other? One might be an *advaita* brahmin, and his neighbour a low-caste poet of passionate love lyrics in Tamil. (Fortunately for our purpose, the Indian social system shows 'next door' to be an exaggeration.) Interaction between these two could not be described either in chronological or in geographical terms. The general problem that these examples illustrate has in fact been realized by scholars, and it has become fashionable to speak of the Great and the Little Traditions when trying to describe synchronic interaction. But just as a purely chronological approach is far too limited to account for those vastly complicated processes which constitute 'historical developments', I have found this distinction of Great and Little Traditions far too simplistic to be useful for our purposes. The model we must assume has to be multidimensional; by introducing terms like 'milieu' I shall attempt to utilize such a model. In the individual case, we shall have to specify further whether — in the extreme — two such milieux represent whole cultural traditions (e.g. Sanskritic versus Tamil), different ideologies or differences such as those between a royal court and an adjacent temple. However complicated and perhaps confusing the picture may be in which I shall try to depict the multidimensional ramifications

and interactions involved in the formation of emotionalism, it will at least illustrate the simplistic nature of the Great and Little Traditions model.

The structure that has been defined as emotional Kṛṣṇa bhakti is complicated, and to follow its historical and social lines of development is much more so. I have therefore felt it necessary to choose a specific focal point for my analysis. This choice has been made by considering the late-medieval developments of Kṛṣṇaism that themselves increasingly concentrate on a specific focus: Kṛṣṇa and the *gopīs*. The farther we move back in history, the more diffuse Kṛṣṇaism seems to become, but I feel that even in earlier works the *gopī*-episodes are never marginal. When we turn to the Tamil traditions, however, the *gopī* does not appear in such a central position; nevertheless, it is unnecessary to alter our centre of observation significantly, since the girl (on the poetic plane) not only corresponds very closely to the *gopī* (on the mythical plane) in her central rôle, but in later Āḻvārs merges with the figure of the *gopī*. Thus while it would be nonsensical to speak about emotional Kṛṣṇa bhakti without reference to the *gopīs* or to the girl of the Āḻvārs, I have chosen these figures as the focus of my analysis for reasons of presentation (it allows us to maintain a permanent theme or *leitmotiv* during the otherwise disjunct investigations) and space (it would have been quite impossible to discuss the Āḻvārs or the *Bhāgavata-Purāṇa in toto*). But this approach, which depicts the developments of emotionalism by concentrating on a typical theme (which time and again will have to be complemented by much more general observations), follows the direction of concentration in later Kṛṣṇaism itself, and thus the choice of the *gopīs*/girl is by no means arbitrary.

1.4 The general environment and background to emotional Kṛṣṇa bhakti

Emotional Kṛṣṇaism is one phenomenon in the vast texture of Hinduism; however complex, it cannot be treated independently of this general texture. One might have hoped that it would be sufficient to describe only matters closely related to our phenomenon, because two hundred years of Western Indology should have provided us with knowledge of the general structures and forces of Hinduism. Unfortunately this is not the case, and instead of

being able simply to refer to accepted authorities concerning the context within which the phenomenon under discussion has to be analysed, we shall first have to investigate areas that are very distant from, and only very indirectly related to, Kṛṣṇa emotionalism. It is therefore appropriate to discuss briefly those neighbouring areas of our phenomenon which (a) demarcate its borders as a distinct phenomenon, and (b) have interacted with it in the course of its developments. Constant reference will have to be made to these areas in the following pages; and at the same time, to state the specific problems that are investigated in this study presupposes my interpretation of these background areas. Thus I shall discuss at this stage three points that either were instrumental in developing emotional bhakti or allow us to demarcate its distinctiveness: the highly influential Vedânta tradition, early Kṛṣṇaism and its intellectual *bhakti-yoga*, and folk religion.

1.41 *The normative ideology of the Vedânta*

The religious history of India is marked by the conflict and the interaction of two major trends: to conceive of the absolute either in terms of a (mystical) state of being or as a personal God. The difference is not one of origin, for both trends have their roots in the *Vedas*. What at a later stage emerged as two different ideological positions appear in the *Vedas* as two aspects of one conception. Gonda writes: 'In the Veda, we notice the tendency not to distinguish strictly and precisely between personal and impersonal powers; in some cases this ambivalence cannot be doubted.'[12] He mentions as an example Sarasvatī: 'She is a person, but this person is always also the river.'[13] This ambivalence applies to the whole of the Vedic conception of the cosmos. Again in the words of Gonda:

> One will have to say that the Vedic 'theory of the gods' represents a grandiose attempt to grasp the character, actions, functions, the influence and the significance of the many and multifarious powers in their individuality and

12 *'Im Veda fällt . . . die Tendenz auf, nicht streng und genau zwischen persönlichen und unpersönlichen Mächten zu unterscheiden . . . in manchen Fällen ist . . . diese Ambivalenz . . . unzweifelhaft'* (1960, p. 36); compare 1948, p. 610.

13 Ibid.

their interaction, which can be perceived always and everywhere; in short, to interpret the cosmic processes and the cosmic order.[14]

This attempt to interpret the cosmos was motivated by down-to-earth interests: long life, strong sons, prosperity and happiness on earth; the powers at work in the cosmos (whether personal or impersonal) were approached with these aims in mind.

Such a this-worldly attitude was shattered by new developments which may well be regarded as a religious revolution. New and baffling forms of religious experience were propagated by homeless mendicants, and eventually two major trends emerged out of the fertile chaos which this 'revolution' had created. One trend, the Upaniṣadic, sought to link the new spirituality with the old Vedic *Weltanschauung*, in which indeed many points of contact were available. The other movement, Buddhism, eschewed such re-integration. But even where links with the older tradition were established, selection from the latter's multifarious expressions was made in accordance with the new spirit. Particularly important was the concentration on the impersonal facets of the Vedic conception; other features were ignored and pushed down to the level of folk religion. The new spiritual premises involved — using here the terminology of the reintegrated, Upaniṣadic branch — a particular form of mystical experience styled *brahman*, the evaluation of man's empirical situation as *saṃsāra* governed by the laws of *karma*, and the systematized 'spiritual exercises'[15] of *yoga*, designed to lead to the state of liberation, *mokṣa*. (In Buddhist terminology this appears as *nirvāṇa*, *duḥkha*, *pratītyasamutpāda* and *dhyāna*.) Whether, as 'Hinduism', related back to the Vedas or, as Buddhism, on new grounds, both the early *Upaniṣads* and the Buddha's teaching share, in my opinion,[16] the same ideology,

[14] Ibid., pp. 48f: *'Man wird . . . sagen müssen, daß die vedische "Götterlehre" einen großartigen Versuch darstellt, . . . das Wesen, die Tätigkeit, die Funktionen, den Einfluß und die Bedeutung der vielen und verschiedenen Mächte, die sich immer und überall spüren lassen, in ihrer Individualität und Zusammenarbeit zu erfassen, kurz, das Weltgeschehen und die Weltordnung zu deuten.'*

[15] Zaehner, 1969, p. 146.

[16] We are dealing here with issues that are still controversial. I may refer here to Frauwallner, 1953, p. 234: 'daß der Verkündigung des Buddha dieselben Anschauungen vom Wesen der Seele und der Erlösung zu Grunde liegen, wie sie in . . . (den) Upaniṣaden geschaffen wurden.' See pp. 217-35 for the discussion. Recently the problem has been discussed in detail by Bhattacharya, 1973; compare also Hardy,

in contrast to the earlier Vedic approach to the world. What now defines a 'Hindu' is the acceptance, as authoritative, of the Vedas in a purely formal sense, the *varṇa*-system with the brahmins in the foremost position, the *dharma* traditionally enjoined for each *varṇa*, and the Vedic ritual executed by the brahmins. These are all criteria of a social rather than of a doctrinal nature,[17] and thus have little bearing upon basic ideological orientation. But what is more important in the present context is the fact that this new ideology consolidated itself during the following centuries as the fundamental structure of Indian thought, as the normative ideology, on the basis of which, or in opposition to which, all other systems of belief function. We can judge the overall influence of this ideology by the extent to which other early forms of Indian thought were drawn into and overlaid by it. Jainism and Vaiśeṣika philosophy appear to have belonged originally to a non-Upaniṣadic current of thought that was primarily interested in the systematic explanation of the empirical world.[18] The plurality of souls is a typical feature of this 'empirical' approach. Nyāya is closely connected with the Vaiśeṣika, while the Mīmāṃsā, as the archaic ritualistic system, equally deals with 'non-mystical' matters. In their further development all four systems developed theories of liberation, and attributed to the liberated *individual* souls a state not unlike that of the universal *brahman* in the mystical Upaniṣadic stream of tradition. Sāṃkhya, on the other hand, originally part of the mystical tradition, shows the impact of the 'empirical' tradition, but on a more limited scale, by adopting the concept of a plurality of individual souls.[19]

In so far as it was 'Hindu', this ideology came to be known as the Vedânta; since Buddhism will not be of importance for our study, it is not necessary to coin a term that incorporates both the Vedânta and Buddhism. On the following pages Vedânta, Upaniṣadic spirituality, normative ideology and so on will be used synonymously, but it must be remembered that the term Vedânta as used here denotes strictly the ideology characterized above.

1975. If a common ground for both the Buddha and the Upaniṣads is assumed, Mahāyāna would appear as main-stream, and Theravāda as side-stream, Buddhism.

17 Compare Bhattacharya, pp. 115-21.

18 See Frauwallner, 1956, pp. 15-28.

19 Thus Frauwallner, 1953, pp. 322f; a different interpretation is given by Chattopadhyaya, 1973, pp. 359-458.

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It will be useful here to see how in terms of that ideology emotional bhakti would have to be evaluated.[20] Since this is an anachronistic question, we can modify it and ask how the emotional complex is characterized in that ideology.

The very premises of Vedânta entail a negative attitude towards the whole empirical personality. Subject as it appears to the three limitations of time, space, and matter, in view of the experience styled *brahman* or *nirvāṇa*, it can only be regarded as *duḥkha*, existential suffering or contingent existence, to use the Buddha's expression. Logically, therefore, the spiritual exercises of *yoga*, *dhyāna* (or *tave* in Jainism) aim at destroying these limitations. Reasons more intuitive than logically consistent are put forward to explain the soul's or the *ātman's* entanglement in *saṃsāra*. Thirst, contact, attachment, ignorance and so on,[21] are the more important metaphorical expressions used. Furthermore, when a detailed conception of the structure of the human personality has been developed, all factors which are considered not to participate in the state of liberation are relegated to the realm of *saṃsāra*; this includes the 'mind' (*buddhi*, *manas*, *citta*, *vijñāna*, etc.) and the 'ego' (as the principle of individuation, or in the strictly monistic schools, as the ultimate centre of object-awareness). It follows from this that the emotions, placed below the 'mind' and the 'ego' and in fact directly involved via the sense-impressions with matter (this is most clearly expressed in the notion *sparśa*, contact), which is considered the basest of all phenomena of *saṃsāra* and the root of evil, were automatically suspect. Any spiritual exercise must start by suppressing them. Nor could the objects to which they relate, such as natural beauty, artistic creation, or the attraction of the female form, be accepted in any positive sense.

Now we must remember that what has been characterized here as the normative ideology does not represent the totality of Indian awareness. The history of Indian ideas has produced a number of non- and anti-normative systems, partly in reaction to the pressures of the normative ideology, which in turn modified the latter. Scholars have hardly taken notice of them or even diagnosed them as such. The ideologies underlying the older *artha-* and *kāma-śāstras*, the tantric movements, the imaginative world of poetry,

[20] For a very general discussion of the problem see Müller, 1965.

[21] See Frauwallner, 1953, pp. 111f; 189f. *Sparśa* 'contact' is both Buddhist and Epic.

etc., are typical examples of non- and anti-normative systems. But even within the Vedânta tradition itself the ideological position characterized above did not remain unchallenged.

The precise nature of these challenges, and the circumstances leading up to them, have remained one of the most obscure areas in our knowledge of Hinduism. All we can do here is to state the fact that at some stage, a few centuries before the close of the pre-Christian era, conceptions of a personal absolute emerged. The earliest documents are the *Īśa-* and *Śvetāśvatara-Upaniṣads* and the *Bhagavadgītā*[22] — all of which appear in something of a textual void. On a larger scale, but still in a similar chronological haze, these theistic conceptions are expressed in the early *Purāṇas*. It may, but only may, be possible to see in these developments the re-emergence of those aspects of ancient Vedic *Weltanschauung* which involved personal cosmic powers, but certainly many Vedic-looking features are nothing but artificial links with the hallowed past. However this may be, early theism by no means questions the Vedânta ideology as such, and I shall treat it as an integral part of the latter. To conceive of *brahman* as a person or a personal experience, and not as some impersonalized state of being, certainly opened the way for major changes in the religious approach. At least potentially the evaluation of the empirical personality given by the normative ideology became subject to questioning. But it took many centuries for these features to come out into the open; as we shall see, it will be emotional Kṛṣṇa bhakti that questions the very basis of the normative ideology. But at this point we must turn to Kṛṣṇa and early Kṛṣṇaism, one of the main components in the inchoate theistic trends of the Vedânta.

1.42 *A summary of the essentials of early Kṛṣṇaism*

Early Kṛṣṇaism, as it is documented in the *Mahābhārata* and the *Bhagavadgītā*, in the older layers of the *Purāṇas* and in a variety of other sources, has in fact been studied extensively. But since these studies have not yet been integrated into a critical, reliable, and comprehensive single work, it may be found useful if I provide here a very brief summary of this material, which will then illustrate the background which I shall take for granted in the main part of

[22] Compare Zaehner, 1970, pp. 105-27 for a discussion of these three early texts from the point of view of theism.

the study. Moreover, there are a few controversial points, as also a number of very interesting features (which from their obscure place of publication have never penetrated general scholarly awareness), which ought to be mentioned here, to make my own position clear. As will be seen in the following pages, the title of the present section, 'early Kṛṣṇaism', is somewhat too general, since all matters concerning Kṛṣṇa as the lover of the *gopīs* (which in part belong chronologically to the 'early' period) have been relegated to Part 2. There they can be discussed in detail without disturbing this brief survey, since they are directly connected with our main theme.

1.421 *The 'historical' Kṛṣṇa*

The attempts to arrive at the hypothetical *Ur-form* of a deity, and to explain from it the partial aspects of its character, which are known from history, in terms of an evolutionary development, have distracted attention from other very important questions.

Some of these 'very important questions' suggested are :

> What the gods meant for the Vedic people themselves; that means: must one not try to work out the character or the idea which a god represented as a living whole, as an organic member of the *Weltanschauung* which supported him; to try and grasp how he stood before the souls of his devotees?[23]

This criticism (which has relevance to areas of scholarship much wider than the Vedic studies to which it refers) quite rightly warns us against any reductionist attempt to derive the highly complex figure of Kṛṣṇa from one specific *Ur-form*, an Ur-Kṛṣṇa. But the attribute 'historical' is not meant in that sense: it was precisely as a 'historical' person, as a god who had entered human history, that Kṛṣṇa 'stood before the souls of his devotees'. This is his distinctive feature.

Now it is obviously very tempting to relate this content of the

[23] Gonda, 1960, p. 52: *'Die Versuche, zu der hypothetischem Urform einer Gottheit durchzustoßen und daraus dann die historisch bekannten Teilaspekte ihrer Gestalt entwicklungsgeschichtlich zu erklären, hat die Aufmerksamkeit von anderen sehr wichtigen Fragen abgelenkt.'—'. . . was die Götter für die vedischen Menschen selbst bedeuteten, das heißt: muß man nicht versuchen, die Gestalt oder die Idee herauszuarbeiten, die ein Gott als ein lebendiges Ganzes, als organisches Glied der ihn tragenden Weltanschauung repräsentierte, zu erfassen versuchen, wie er vor der Seele seiner Verehrer stand?'*

religious awareness of Kṛṣṇa to external history, and to ask whether there is any evidence for the assumption that Kṛṣṇa *lived in history*. Some scholars have tried to establish this by pointing out the human, and 'all-too-human', characteristics of Kṛṣṇa which we find, in particular, in the epic *Mahābhārata*.[24] But one may wonder whether such 'scandalous' features were not quite natural and acceptable in the heroic age when the epic was originally conceived.

Another approach looks at the many purāṇic accounts of Kṛṣṇa, and by means of a criticism of literary forms and genres tries to sort out a historical kernel among the mass of fairy-tale etc. *motifs*.[25] From this approach, Kṛṣṇa's war with Jarāsandha, the king of Magadha, emerges as the historical kernel.[26]

A different kernel is arrived at by means of textual criticism: Kṛṣṇa's war with Kālayavana, and the Śyāmantaka episode.[27] Thus it does not seem impossible that a 'purely human'[28] personality, of whom the MBh and PurPañc have preserved vague memories, forms one of the historical cornerstones of the 'Kṛṣṇa' figure. But what is much more important is the fact that the *belief in* his historicity remained a productive element in the theology of Kṛṣṇa, although the 'original' Kṛṣṇa figure soon developed beyond all recognition. Theology was forced on this premise to accept as factually given all features and characteristics which tradition handed down however shocking they may have appeared at that later age. These may have been truthful accounts of the character and life of a 'real' Kṛṣṇa, or may have been simply the expressions of the values and ideals of an earlier age or different stratum of society, but they certainly provided a fertile challenge to the ideology of a later, more moralistic and world-negating, age.

Now it is interesting to note that the Indian tradition itself somehow felt the need to establish the historicity of Kṛṣṇa, and a textual 'authority' for his historical existence was seen in *Chandogya-*

[24] For example, Katre, 1932; a similar list in Hopkins, 1915, pp. 215f.

[25] See Ruben, 1944, pp. 6-8; 260f.

[26] Ibid., p. 8.

[27] These are found in *Brahma-Purāṇa* 14, 48ff and 16, 13ff; see for these and parallels, Kirfel, 1927, pp. 437-8. Kirfel himself has given an interpretation of this *purāṇapañcalakṣaṇa* material (1926), particularly p. 315. These episodes allow, according to Kirfel, 'auf eine wirkliche historische Persönlichkeit [zu] schließen . . .' (p. 315); Gonda (1960, p. 240) also speaks of a 'historischen Kern'.

[28] Kirfel, 1926, p. 315.

Upaniṣad III, 17, 6.[29] As happened in many other cases, this identification was also an attempt by followers of Kṛṣṇa to 'prove' his Vedic sanctity. For all we know, the early *Purāṇas* may have derived the name of Kṛṣṇa's mother Devakī from this same passage in the *Upaniṣad*.

The relative antiquity of the oldest layers of the purāṇic accounts concerning Kṛṣṇa can be inferred from the fact that both the Jains and Buddhists took over these legends (without then participating in the further mythological developments of the Kṛṣṇa figure).[30]

But we can go back even further to the fourth century B.C., on account of a *sūtra* in Pāṇini's Grammar.[31] Since 'Vāsudeva' is mentioned here along with Arjuna, it is not unlikely that the Kṛṣṇa of the MBh is referred to.[32] Possibly, 'Vāsudeva' here is already the deified Kṛṣṇa (see 1.422), as Patañjali would suggest.[33] It is not possible here to give a detailed description of the character or the life of the 'early' epic/purāṇic Kṛṣṇa, the ruthless and cunning counsellor to the Pāṇḍavas.[34] But one point ought to be mentioned here. Bhandarkar[35] has been responsible for a very artificial and arbitrary construction (a prototype of structuralism?): just as the Buddha was the religious teacher of the Śākyas, and Mahāvīra that of the Jñātṛkas, the religious teacher (and the only 'Hindu' for that matter!) of the Andhakas must have been Kṛṣṇa. In spite of the structural force of the pattern, there is no evidence

[29] Bhandarkar (1913, pp. 11f) accepts in fact this identification of the epic-purāṇic warrior Kṛṣṇa with the upaniṣadic brahmin student and teacher; but in spite of Gonda's (1960, p. 238) 'nicht ausgeschlossen', I consider it to be more than unlikely that we are dealing here with the same person.

[30] See Jacobi, 1888, p. 494, where the author suggests the second/third century B.C. for the Jain borrowings, and Lüders, 1904, for the Buddhist versions.

[31] IV, 3, 98: 'suffix (vun) =_ aka is added after the names of Vāsudeva and Arjuna (. . .) to denote [a person who] belongs to them and is loyal to them (this from *sūtra* 95).'

[32] These *sūtras* are often discussed; I refer here only to Agrawala, pp. 360ff.

[33] This second century BC commentator on Pāṇini indicates some difficulties over the *sūtras*. IV, 3, 99 mentions a suffix (vuñ) = ±′ aka 'after names of *kṣatriyas*'. Quite rightly Patañjali wonders why *sūtra* 98 (see note 31) should make separate reference to Vāsudeva, if he was only a *kṣatriya*. As a possible solution he suggests that for Pāṇini 'Vāsudeva' was already more than a *kṣatriya*, viz., a *tatra-bhavān*. The obvious difficulty here is that in that case Arjuna too would appear 'deified'. See *Mahābhāṣya*, ed. Joshi, vol. IV, p. 213, columns a/b.

[34] On this one may consult Zaehner, 1966, pp. 102-24; Zaehner, 1970, pp. 172-93; Klaes, 1975 *passim*.

[35] 1913, p. 9.

at all that the *Gītā* contains Kṛṣṇa's own 'religious teaching'.[36] It seems fairly clear that this work is a theological *reflection upon* Kṛṣṇa by a later age. Gonda states firmly: 'However it is certain that the life-story does not suggest that we should regard Kṛṣṇa as a teacher like the Buddha.'[37] Neither the MBh nor the early *Purāṇas* attempt to do this.

1.422 *Bhagavān, the deified Kṛṣṇa*

The next step in the development is that Kṛṣṇa is regarded as the *personal absolute*. This must have been a very complex process which is obscure to us in many respects.

Already the earliest PurPañc texts speak of Kṛṣṇa's father as 'Vasudeva'[38] from which then Vāsudeva, 'son of Vasudeva' is derived as a name of Kṛṣṇa. Gonda now thinks it to be 'more likely'[39] that Kṛṣṇa was identified with a god Vāsudeva already worshipped. The father's name as found in the *Purāṇas* would then be an artificial reconstruction. Anyway, in BhG VII, 19 Kṛṣṇa speaks of himself as Vāsudeva, and an inscription found at Besnagar, of *c.* 115 B.C.,[40] speaks of a *bhāgavata* worshipper of Vāsudeva who then is identified with Kṛṣṇa. Thus we have clear testimony for the fact that Kṛṣṇa-Vāsudeva was worshipped as a divine being in the second century BC — testimony obviously corroborated by the *Gītā* and other portions of the MBh which nevertheless are much more difficult to date. Perhaps Pāṇini, already in the fourth century BC, is aware of this (see 1.421). Moreover, the term *bhāgavata* found in this inscription is interesting; it can be derived from *bhagavān*, 'worshipful being'[41] which soon came to denote 'personal absolute God', particularly when applied to Kṛṣṇa. A *bhāgavata* then is 'someone who belongs to *Bhagavān*'.

Such a process of 'deification' would not have been possible in the Indian context without recourse to the Vedas. Thus, for example, in BhG X, 21 Kṛṣṇa is identified with Viṣṇu, who appears

[36] 'There is every reason to believe that the *Bhagavad Gītā* contains the substance of religious doctrines which Krishna . . . taught in his lifetime. Mal, 1960, p. ix.

[37] Gonda, 1960, p. 242.

[38] E.g., *Brahmâṇḍa-Purāṇa* II, 71, 197.203.209.212, etc., with parallels (see Kirfel, 1927, pp. 472ff).

[39] 1960, p. 237.

[40] Marshall, 1909 and Fleet, 1909.

[41] Compare, for example, Hopkins, 1911.

a few times in the *Ṛg Veda*.[42] BhG XV, 18 links him with another god, Puruṣôttama, and makes specific reference to the Vedas.[43] Once these links with the Vedas were established further developments could take place, for example a projection of Vedic themes on to the 'historical' events in Kṛṣṇa's life, which were thus given a theological interpretation. Thus, when Viṣṇu and Indra appear together in the *ṛcs*, Viṣṇu remains a 'sympathetic assistant' in the background, Indra being the active one. Kṛṣṇa's passive assistance to Arjuna is interpreted by reference to this same theme.[44] While it was relatively easy to establish such links between Kṛṣṇa and the Vedic tradition, the teaching of the *Upaniṣads* about *brahman* as the monistic 'impersonal' absolute provided a much greater challenge to early Kṛṣṇaism. The *Gītā* is probably the earliest text to consider these questions and to attempt a theological answer to them. Its position is as simple as it must have been shocking to the 'normative ideology' at the time: *brahman* subsists in Kṛṣṇa, who in turn transcends it.

BhG XIV, 27: 'For I am the base supporting *brahman* — immortal [brahman] which knows no change . . .'

BhG VI, 15: 'that peace which has *nirvāṇa* as its end and which subsists in me . . .'[45]

It is impossible here to enter into details of the teaching of the *Gītā* about the 'ontology' of Kṛṣṇa and *brahman/nirvāṇa*.[46] One further line which the process of Kṛṣṇa's apotheosis took must at least be mentioned here, viz., his identification with Nārāyaṇa. On the one hand, a *ṛṣi*-pair Nara/Nārāyaṇa appears in the MBh as the connecting link, or an alternative correspondence, with Indra/Viṣṇu or Arjuna/Kṛṣṇa.[47] On the other hand, Nārāyaṇa alone appears to have some obscure independent origin, and at a later state he entered the Pāñcarātra and other branches of

[42] Note also BhG XI, 9 'Hari', a synonym for Viṣṇu.

[43] *Vede ca prathitaḥ Puruṣôttamaḥ.*

[44] See Gonda, 1969, pp. 32ff; 161; also 156f.

[45] *Brahmaṇo hi pratiṣṭhâham amṛtasyâvyayasya ca; śāntiṃ nirvāṇa-paramāṃ mat-saṃsthām* (trans. Zaehner, 1969).

[46] These have been discussed by Zaehner, 1969 *passim*, and 1970 pp. 105-71. A more dynamic model, oscillation of different aspects, has been suggested by Gonda, 1948, pp. 629; 631.

[47] See above, note 44.

Vaiṣṇavism as the personal absolute.[48] In whatever way this very complex development may have taken place, for most of the period under discussion in the main part of this study, Kṛṣṇa is synonymous with Vāsudeva, Viṣṇu, Nārāyaṇa, Bhagavān, all names which denote the 'personal absolute'.

1.423 *The manifestations of Kṛṣṇa/Viṣṇu*

The religious awareness of Kṛṣṇa as a historical person on the one hand, and the tendencies to deify him, in fact to see in him the Vedic god Viṣṇu or the absolute Bhagavān on the other, created a contrast and a theological tension. How can one and the same 'person' be 'historical' and eternal-absolute? One can differentiate three answers that were formulated in the course of the development of Kṛṣṇaism.

(1) By far the most important is in fact also the most archaic: one single 'persona' is assumed — 'Kṛṣṇa' — who manifests himself in time and history by being born as a human being. The terminology for this 'manifestation' varies considerably. Thus the famous BhG IV, 8 *sambhavāmi yuge yuge* ('I come into being age after age') is perhaps the least precise. Expressions like *rūpam*, *vapus*, *tanum* + *kṛ*, *āsthā* — all denoting 'taking on a body'[49] — seem to go back to an archaic pattern of 'identification': A is the *rūpa* of B (in the sense of a magical/mystical merger of A and B).[50] *Prādur-bhū* 'to show oneself, manifest oneself' is found in the MBh and the PurPañc.[51] Although a certain technical usage of these terms in specific contexts would indicate a difference between this kind of 'birth' and ordinary birth due to *karma* and *saṃsāra*,[52] these expressions are too vague to be really satisfactory. Nevertheless, it is this conception that has survived in the greater part of Vaiṣṇavism/Kṛṣṇaism: the Tamil Vaiṣṇava texts, including the Āḻvārs, employ exclusively this concept,[53] and even medieval

[48] See Hacker, 1960, p. 49, note 1, for references to ancient myths in the PurPañc which mention Nārāyaṇa but seem to be independent from 'Kṛṣṇaism/Vaiṣṇavism'. Compare also Das Gupta, 1931-2, p. 108, and Gonda, 1948, p. 633.

[49] For textual references see Hacker, 1960, p. 49, note 1.

[50] See Oldenberg, 1919, pp. 100-09.

[51] MBh III, 272, 70 (Bombay); PurPañc p. 482, verse 3; p. 488, verse 63; etc.

[52] Hacker, 1960, p. 49.

[53] In fact, the more 'precise' term which was later developed and which many

theologians and mystics like Vallabha and Caitanya use it (probably due to the paramount impact of the *Gītā*). For all these groups it is thus more appropriate to employ the term 'Kṛṣṇaism' than 'Vaiṣṇavism', reserving the latter term for schools which consider Kṛṣṇa as *avatāra* of Viṣṇu.

(2) A more precise terminology was developed in the 'avatāra' concept. Here not only are the births of the *avatāras* quite specifically Vaiṣṇava-mythological, but also the 'persona' itself is differentiated: Viṣṇu as the transcendental absolute, and Kṛṣṇa *as one of the* (classical ten) *avatāras*. But as already stated, for most of *our* material this conception does not apply. A careful and meticulous study by P. Hacker (1960) makes it possible to trace all details of the terminological developments which finally led to the '*avatāra* concept', and it is not necessary to enter into an elaborate discussion here. But one interesting point may be mentioned. According to Hacker it appears that 'the "coming down" [=avatāra] was in the mythological awareness of a relatively early period a *special case* of Viṣṇu's "manifestations" (prādurbhāva), viz. his being born as Kṛṣṇa.'[54] In other words, it was *because of* Kṛṣṇa's 'historicity' that a concept 'avatāra' could be created, and then in turn was extended to apply to other 'manifestations' (like Rāma, Nṛsiṃha, etc.) and thus gave rise to a whole pattern. *Avatāra* as denoting the person 'descending' (and not the action itself) seems to have evolved only towards the middle of the first millennium A.D.

(3) The 'Nārāyaṇa milieu' provided a third conception of a much more abstract and speculative nature: the *vyūha* and *vibhava* concepts. Para-Vāsudeva evolves into Saṅkarṣaṇa (Kṛṣṇa's brother Balarāma), who then evolves into Pradyumna (Kṛṣṇa's son), and he in turn evolves into Aniruddha (Kṛṣṇa's grandson). On the other hand, this system also knows of Kṛṣṇa as one of the many *vibhavas* (or *avatāras*). But precise research similar to that of

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scholars assume to be the more universal one, 'avatāra', is used in medieval Tamil in a generalized (and not, technical) sense, viz., for 'birth, to be born'. Compare below pp. 220f, 455ff.

[54] P. 50: das "Herabsteigen" im mythologischen Bewußtsein einer relativ frühen Zeit ein Sonderfall eines "Erscheinens" (prādurbhāva) Viṣṇu's war, nämlich sein Geborenwerden als Kṛṣṇa.'

Hacker on the *avatāra* concept is lacking, and thus the details are as yet very obscure, and moreover Pāñcarātra will not form part of the present study; thus details cannot and need not be given here.

1.424 *Devotion to Kṛṣṇa, and intellectual bhakti*

Now just as the polarity Viṣṇu/Bhagavān: historical Kṛṣṇa stimulated philosophical (or better, theological) reflection which ultimately led to conceptions like the *prādurbhāva* or *avatāra*, it also provided a stimulus in another direction, viz., concerning the human attitude towards Kṛṣṇa, 'devotion'. Here again it would be totally wrong to assume that the modality of this devotion was finally established from the moment its potentials were laid out (that is, from the moment Kṛṣṇa was 'deified'). Only a long process — in this case not of theological reflection but of 'devotional experimentation' — could have led to anything like a definitive pattern.

The key concept here is bhakti.[55] Although I may be trying to force an open door, in view of a number of even recent works that distort the whole issue, I think it may be opportune again briefly to discuss the early denotations of the terms. The two important texts are Pāṇini's *sūtras* and the *Bhagavadgītā*.

In spite of the elaborate discussions and the various controversies, in my opinion Pāṇini IV, 3, 83-100 seems to be clear. 95 establishes the denotation 'bhakti' for the suffixes listed in 96-100. The objects of bhakti listed here should, *in toto*, circumscribe the emotionally minimal significance of bhakti itself (as understood by Pāṇini). Far from suggesting that bhakti means 'devotion' in a religious sense, the *sūtras* make it clear that the meaning is a very general 'liking'. 96 mentions 'material things' (acitta), and by implication, 'places' and 'seasons'. The *Kāśikā* (before A.D. 600) explains '(material things) like cakes, sweet cakes, and sweet milk dishes'.[56] Thus we would obtain the meaning 'to be fond of', 'to like', (places) like (the town) Srughna, and (seasons)

[55] Gonda, 1960, pp. 244-5, notes 42, 44, 45, 49, gives a bibliography on bhakti. The semantics of the word have been investigated by Dhavamony, pp. 13-23; Gonda, 1948, pp. 607-39, is the most extensive and reliable study: there one finds references to further literature.

[56] *Apūpa, śaṣkuli, pāyasa.*

like summer,[57] or with an even more neutral denotation. 'to belong to'. 97-100 all concern kings, warlords, etc., of some form, and thus 'to be loyal (in a feudal sense)' seems appropriate.[58] If 'to belong to, to be loyal to, to like' is the correct (minimal) semantic field for 'bhakti', it appears to be very difficult indeed to assume a more intensely 'emotional' or 'passionate' meaning for bhakti here, *even if* the 'Vāsudeva' in 98 were the absolute God. Even if one were to postulate that in the fourth century BC 'bhakti to Vāsudeva' was a highly passionate affair, one certainly could not derive this from the word 'bhakti' itself and its early contexts.

I turn to the *Bhagavadgītā*. Zaehner seems justified in saying that: 'In the Gītā *bhakta* almost invariably means "loyal, devoted, and devout".'[59] Thus we find BhG IV, 3 *bhakto'si* 'you are loyal'.

But the situation has become more complex, because as it appears to me, in addition to this 'ordinary' meaning of the term 'bhakti', we find also a more specialized, 'technical' usage. We can look for instance at BhG XII, 6-8:

> But those who cast off all their works on Me, *solely intent on* Me, and *meditate on Me in spiritual exercise*, leaving no room for others, . . . these will I lift up . . out of the ocean of recurring death, . . for *their thoughts are fixed on Me*. On Me alone *let your mind dwell, stir up your soul* [buddhi] *to enter* Me . . . (Zaehner)

Some of the typical phrases here are: *ananyena yogena*, *māṃ dhyāyantaḥ* (6), *mayy āveśita-cetas* (7), *mayy eva mana ādhatsva* (8), *mayi buddhiṃ niveśaya* (plus a variant *yogam uttamam āsthitaḥ* (8)).

A great many similar phrases are found in other verses of the *Gītā*: *ananya-cetas* VIII, 14; *ananya-manas* IX, 13; cp. *ananyāś cintaya* IX, 22; *ananyā bhakti* VIII, 22; XI, 54; *ananya-bhāk* IX, 30; *ananya-yoga* XIII, 10.[60]

I think it is quite legitimate, as a preliminary observation, to point out the basically 'intellectual' tenor of these phrases, a stress on 'mental concentration' with which the notion of *yoga* seems intrinsically linked. One semantically complements the other, *yoga is* the concentration of the mind. The *yoga* exercises aim at

[57] These are actually excluded from *sūtra* 96, but 'bhakti' 95 is also a further meaning for the suffixes listed before 95.

[58] On the difficulty concerning 98 *Vāsudevârjuna* see note 31.

[59] 1969, p. 181; but I would hesitate to use 'devout' because its associations are too emotional.

[60] These parallels are listed by Zaehner, 1969, p. 327 *ad* XII, 6.

gathering the diffuse energies of the mind (*manas*, *buddhi*, etc.), perfecting them, and making them instrumental in the liberating 'perception' of the *ātman*.[61] Moreover, the very frequent *ananya* seems to indicate that Kṛṣṇa himself is the only proper object for that mental concentration and those *yoga* exercises. Not surprisingly this point is endlessly repeated in a work which — possibly for the first time — expounds the doctrine that Kṛṣṇa is the real *ātman* and that *brahman* is a state inferior to and dependent on him. If we then assume that *yoga* is here a spiritual exercise which concentrates all mental faculties on 'perceiving' the state of liberation *which is* Kṛṣṇa, the term bhakti should not create any more difficulties. Bhakti thus seems to appear in the same slot as *yoga*/*manas*/*cetas*. Moreover, BhG XIV, 26 has the compound *bhakti-yoga*. In IX, 13, the *ananya-manas* qualifies the verb *bhaj* just as *ananya* does for *bhāk* in IX, 30. Similarly in XIII, 10 bhakti is qualified by (*mayi*) *ananya-yogena*, and in IX, 28-9 a person *yoga-yuktâtmā* is said to approach Kṛṣṇa, which then may well be paraphrased in the following sentence: *ye bhajanti māṃ bhaktyā mayi te* 'they are in me who through bhakti (bhaj) me'.[62] The emotionally minimal semantic field expressed here by *bhakti*, *bhāj*, and the verb *bhaj* appear to be *hardly* different from that established in Pāṇini. For its more technical meaning I suggest that *bhaj* is quite closely related to the *ananya*, stressing like this attribute the exclusivity of *yoga* with reference to Kṛṣṇa, an exclusivity which expresses itself in a voluntary 'belonging to, liking for, being loyal to, and concentrating all one's mental faculties on him'. A less 'minimal' interpretation would be justified only if from passages in the *Gītā* itself it could be shown that bhakti is a truly emotionally 'loaded' term. But those factors which constitute our definition of 'emotional bhakti', viz., erotic, aesthetic, ecstatic colourings, are clearly absent in the *Gītā*. In *that* sense bhakti is there 'intellectual' and non-emotional. Zaehner too has pointed out that bhakti in the *Gītā* presupposes *yoga*: . . . in order to draw near to God it is assumed that the aspirant is already *yukta*, already integrated in himself.[63]

[61] See Frauwallner, 1953, pp. 432-3; compare pp. 136-9.

[62] IX, 29; for further passages illustrating the relationship between *bhakti* and *yoga* see Zaehner, 1969, pp. 287-9.

[63] 1970, p. 136.

Now it would be quite legitimate to stress the fact that this 'intellectual concentration on Kṛṣṇa', because it concerns a *person*, is bound to have an emotive colouring, whether one wants to derive this from the 'feudal relationship' (the model underlying the word 'bhakti') or merely from the personal nature of the ultimate goal of the *yoga* exercises. Gonda lays much emphasis on this aspect. He paraphrases the significance of the word 'bhakti', as it is generally employed in the MBh, with terms like 'loyalty, attachment, deep personal liking, readiness to serve, love . . .'[64] and agrees with Hopkins[65] that 'bhakti is affection rather than faith'. However, he then asks whether 'love, worship, devotion' alone do justice to the connotations of the terms as specifically used in the BhG[66] and goes on to say that:

> With this not all has been said: 'to concentrate with all one's faculties, with one's entire personality on God' defines this 'worship', and furthermore, that worship and service are accompanied by the intention to unite with (in whatever way this 'going to' or 'enter into' may be conceived of) the Highest, in whose being [or: essence] one is aware of participating.[67]

Similarly Lacombe[68] speaks of a *'participation à Dieu par la connaissance d'amour'*, and Esnoul[69] of a *'participation de l'âme à Dieu'*.

In one sense all this is probably correct; but one may still ask whether such characterizations are not somewhat imprecise and thus misleading. Almost automatically such descriptions evoke emotional associations which are alien to the character of this early form of bhakti, which is — and we must not forget this point — a type of *yoga*. The attribute 'intellectual' may not do full justice to the phenomenon of bhakti as it appears in the early texts, but I employ it in order to stress the far-reaching differences of this form of bhakti from the later, emotional variety. Gonda

[64] 1948, p. 617; compare p. 616 (*trouw, aanhankelijkheid, diepe, persoonlijke toegenegenheid, dienstbereidheid, liefde*).

[65] 1911, p. 138 (quoted by Gonda).

[66] Ibid., p. 625 (*beminnen, vereren, devotie*).

[67] Ibid., p. 630; compare p. 650 (*daarmee is . . . niet alles gezegd: 'het concentreren van al zijn krachten, van zijn gehele eigen persoonlijkheid op God' bepaalt deze 'verering' . . . nader, dat vereren en dienen gaat gepaard met de wil tot vereniging met (hoe men zich dat 'gaan tot' of 'ingaan in', dan ook voorstelt) de Hoogste, in wiens wezen men beseft deel te hebben*).

[68] Quoted ibid., p. 651, note 3.

[69] 1964, p. 121.

does not seem to notice (he accepts the anachronistic three-*mārga* theory)[70] that 'concentration' and 'unification' (or 'participation') are not contrasts and parallels to *yoga* and *jñāna*, but are conceived of as the special, theistic, manifestations of the latter. *Yoga* remains the technique, and *jñāna* the goal, of bhakti, which in turn brings to both meditational technique and its goal a theistic modification. But — and this is equally important — there is very little evidence to show that such modifications affected the basic nature of *yoga* and its underlying ideology. Indeed '*all* his faculties' (*al* zijn krachten) and 'his *entire* own personality' (zijn *gehele* eigen persoonlijkheid) are certainly not envisaged here as involved in the *yoga* techniques, and for that matter, in bhakti.

1.43 *Folk religion and non-Vedic worship*

In early Kṛṣṇaism we have a form of religion that at least in the texts documenting it moves very close to the normative ideology of the Vedânta. But it would be a mistake to assume that later developments (including emotional bhakti) simply evolve from this area demarcated by Vedânta and early Kṛṣṇaism. At this stage it will suffice to describe the outlines of one quite different complex which has contributed to the transformation of early bhakti. We can conveniently begin by looking at a verse in the BhG:

> Be it a leaf or flower or fruit or water that a zealous soul may offer Me with love's devotion, that do I [willingly] accept, for it was love that made the offering.[71]

Bhakti (we need not discuss Zaehner's translation 'love's devotion' and 'love') here motivates and justifies a certain form of offering, about which we hear nothing more in the BhG and which, it could be argued, is regarded as crude and rudimentary. However, other sources show that this particular religious expression was by no means marginal to Indian society. What Kṛṣṇa is alluding to is in fact basic to something I here call folk religion. I am not claiming that one homogeneous 'religion' could be found in all the villages of ancient India — far from it; but whatever

[70] 1970, p. 22. 'One of the three ways to salvation'.

[71] IX, 26: *pattraṃ puṣpaṃ phalaṃ toyaṃ yo me bhaktyā prayacchati tad ahaṃ bhakty-upahṛtam aśnāmi prayatâtmanaḥ* (trans. Zaehner).

the differences, we encounter time and again a common *materia*, and it is this which I style 'folk religion'. Moreover, these typical features seem to be alien to the forms of worship expressed in the Vedic tradition and it is probably not accidental that Buddhist sources, more closely in touch with 'popular' strata of Indian society, provide us with earlier information than do Hindu texts.

First some examples of typical objects employed in this type of worship:

'flowers and perfumes'[72]; 'des fleurs, de l'encens, des guirlandes, des poudres, des parfums, des aromates et des onguents, des vêtements, des drapeaux et des bannières'[73]; 'heavenly flowers, incense, perfumes, wreaths, unguents, aromatic powders, strips of cloth, parasols, banners, bells, flags,... rows of lamps'[74]; 'heavenly flowers,... best perfumes,... unguents'[75]; 'flowers, garlands, perfumes, flags, banners,... unguents'; 'parasols,... incense,... clothes,... fruits'[76]; 'flower-garlands,... chaplets of peacock feathers, swinging bells, and autumn flowers[77].

In a canonical Jain work we read:

'Fetch flowers of all five colours, growing in the water and on the land, and also take a large beautiful bouquet to the *nāga* shrine. With those flowers prepare a lovely bower decorated with various paintings. Keep the bouquet that diffuses sweet perfume and fragrance suspended from a canopy in that bower.' Then the attendants of Padmāvatī followed her, carrying bunches of flowers and incense-burners.[78]

In the same contexts we also hear time and again of music accompanying the worship:

who caused musical instruments, drums, conch trumpets, and noisy great drums to be played, and raised the rattle of cymbals... who caused sweet lutes, cymbals, tabors, small drums, reed-pipes, flutes of [ekonnaḍa] or sugar-cane to be made . . .[79]; great clamour that caused delight . . . through the sounds of the *tūryas*[80].

[72] *Saddharmapuṇḍarīka* II, 88.

[73] *Mahāprajñāpāramitāśāstra* I, p. 580.

[74] *8000-Prajñāpāramitāsūtra* (Conze, 1973, p. 105).

[75] *Prajñāpāramitā-Ratnaguṇasaṃcaya-gāthāḥ* III, 3 (ibid., p. 15).

[76] *Mahāvastu* II, p. 362.

[77] *Harivaṃśa* (cr. ed.) 59, 58.

[78] *Nāyādhammakahāo* VIII, pp. 95f (abbreviated).

[79] *Saddharma°* II, 89/90. The *Mahāvastu* inserts 'instrumental music' in the passage quoted above.

[80] *Harivaṃśa* 60, 14.

In one case also the making of an image for worship in this manner is mentioned:

> Others who had images of Sugatas made of the seven precious substances, of copper or brass, have all of them reached enlightenment.[81]

This cosmos of ravishing beauty, thrilling to all the senses, this expression of one's worship in sensuous, physical terms, is indeed far removed from the *pratyāhāra*, the withdrawal of the senses from their objects, which constitutes the very beginning of actual *yoga* technique. Thus it is not surprising that the references quoted above occur in contexts which in some way try to give a new justification for 'folk practices'. Kṛṣṇa accepts such offerings only when they are made in the spirit of bhakti.[82] The *Saddharmapuṇḍarīka* adds that such rites were performed 'in order to celebrate the highest enlightenment',[83] while the *Pāramitāśāstra* does not comment on the fact that such offerings are made to the Buddha Śākyamuni. The *°sūtra* is more polemical, for it stresses that the worship of the *°sūtra* itself is infinitely more meritorious than those rituals performed at the *stūpas*.[84] The *Mahāvastu* (supposedly a *Mahāsāṅghika* work and thus close to 'popular religion') takes the most positive position by actually praising such worship of Buddhas and *stūpas*.[85] The fragment quoted from the *Harivaṃśa* is taken from the Govardhana episode with its well-known antagonism between archaic rituals and Kṛṣṇa-worship. The passage from the sixth *aṅga* of the Jain canon probably comes closest to a value-neutral description of folk religion; it passes no judgement on this *nāga*-worship.

While it is relatively easy to reconstruct the *materia* of folk religion by abstracting from the various new *formae* imposed upon it by Mahāyāna Buddhism or Kṛṣṇaism, it is more difficult to envisage the original kinds of belief which they replaced. At least certain typical *locales* and beings connected with them can be recognized. This implies an important feature, viz., that the

[81] *Saddharma°* II, 83.
[82] *Bhakty-upahṛtam*; see note 71 above.
[83] *Saddharma°*, 89.
[84] Conze, p. 106; see also *°gāthā* III, 4.
[85] *Mahāvasta*, II, p. 362: *na tasya puṇyasya śakyaṃ paryantam adhigantum*, 'to his merit nothing superior can be ascertained'; for a discussion of the ideological problems Buddhism had to overcome concerning folk-religion see Dutt, pp. 202ff.

'divine' is permanently present in a particular place, and distinguishes this form of religion from Vedic understanding. For instance, after the Buddha's death,

> The people of Kuśinagara came the next day and held a six-day wake for the Blessed One. They *danced, sang, made music*, and *offered garlands and scents*. ...On the seventh day, eight chiefs of the Mallas carried the bier . . to a tribal shrine. There they cremated the body. When they asked Ānanda how the remains of the Tathāgata should be treated, he replied 'Like those of a king of kings. Cremate the body and build a *mound* at the crossroads to enshrine the relics.'

This is Robinson's résumé of the ancient accounts.[86] The *locale* is here the earthen mound, the *stūpa* or *caitya*, which also in the Buddhist texts mentioned above (except the *°śāstra*) provides the context of worship.

Another *locale* is certain trees in which *yakṣas* are believed to be living. Auboyer describes this widespread religious complex:

> To gratify them [=the tree *yakṣas*], elaborate cults were built around them. Their trees were surrounded by wooden or stone barriers, to guarantee them against all external attack, and an altar was built nearby. The earth around the tree-trunks was carefully cleaned and swept. The villagers, chiefly the women, came often to hang beautiful *garlands* on their branches. . . They sprinkled the trunk with sugared *water*, milk or honey, and smeared it with red-coloured *powders* and *oils*. Some made ritual lustrations by spurting water at the trunk from their mouths. Offerings of cakes were placed on its altar and between its roots, *incense* sticks were left to smoulder, and tiny *lamps* were lighted.[87]

The sculptures of Bhārhut and Amarāvatī, inspired by popular Buddhism, bear witness to the integration of this tree-worship; the *yakṣa* and the Buddha have merged as objects of folk worship.[88]

[86] 1970, p. 35 (my italics). The account is found in the *Mahāparinibbāṇasutta*, and has been discussed, for example by Thomas, 1927, pp. 151-5.

[87] 1961, p. 154 (my italics). On p. 316, various sources for this résumé are mentioned, particularly the *Jātakas*. Compare also J. Fergusson, *Tree and serpent worship*, London, 1873; Viennot, 'Le cult de l'arbre dans l'Inde ancienne', *Annales du Musee Guimet*, LIX, Paris, 1954.

[88] E.g., Auboyer, Plate I (opposite p. 144) shows women bringing rice as an offering to a sacred tree; Plate XII illustrates the worship of a sacred tree with flower-garlands, and Plate XIX depicts a *nāga* worshipping at such a tree, where the presence of the Buddha is symbolized by flowers scattered on a pedestal (or altar) under the tree.

Nāga-worship and the making of images have been mentioned above.[89]

Iconography provides further interesting evidence of the relationship between this folk religion and the cult of Viṣṇu. According to Moeller, for instance, the *śrīvatsa* (the tuft of hair on Viṣṇu's chest) has its origin in *nāga* symbolism.[90] In more general terms, the same author writes[91] that the iconographic treatment of Viṣṇu's sculptures (which were first produced by the school of Mathurā) is clearly derived from the models employed to depict *nāgas*, *yakṣas*, and so on. Thus we have here a concrete example for the interaction between folk religion and the cult of Kṛṣṇa/Viṣṇu. However, we need not enter here into the details of that interaction. But we may ask the question whether the directly emotional (in a general sense of the word) elements of folk religion, the sensuous forms of worship, the aesthetic aspects of music, song, and dance, and above all the artistic and adorned images of Kṛṣṇa, — whether all this had any impact on the character of bhakti. At this stage only some preliminary observations can be made, but I shall try to show at a later stage in this study that such an impact can indeed be assumed.

The elements of folk worship described here are not any more connected with the system of religious reflection and symbols which originally belonged to that worship, at least not for the period to which the sources quoted here belong (up to the third or fourth century AD). In terms of early Kṛṣṇaism, which as we have seen was preoccupied with establishing itself as a legitimate expression of the Vedânta, such religious factors could only be of marginal interest. This is also suggested by the two sources mentioned, the *Gītā* (IX, 26) and the *Harivaṃśa* (59f). Before folk worship could in any way affect and alter the character of intellectual bhakti, the ideological distance between the two had to be overcome. The material which will be discussed in Part 2 does not show such rapprochement, but this need not surprise us. Early Kṛṣṇaism is much too preoccupied with trying to integrate a new Kṛṣṇa figure, which originated certainly in a folk-religious milieu, into intellectual bhakti. Instead of demonstrating the

[89] Plate XIX (ibid.) shows the Buddhist adaptation of the *nāga* cult.

[90] More precisely, a column with a serpent on each side, p. 13. On p. 12, Figure 3a shows such a motif, from a pottery fragment of the second or third century AD.

[91] Moeller, p. 15.

impact of folk religion on early bhakti, these documents illustrate the reverse process, the absorption of folk religion into the normative ideology.

However, in other areas of religious activity, in the North during the centuries after the fourth century AD, we are able to witness the formation of systems that lift the forms of folk worship as such to more conscious and ideologically acceptable levels, which means that they aim at integrating them into the Vedânta. Mention may be made of the Vaikhānasas[92] (their *sūtra* belongs to the fourth century AD or so[93]), the Pāñcarātra whose earliest document seems to be the *Nārāyaṇīya* (MBh XII, 335-52 Bom.)[94] with the *Ahirbudhnya-Saṃhitā* of a somewhat later date (sixth century AD?)[95], and also the Śaivite *Āgamas*. In these systems, the forms of worship — styled 'Hinduistic' by Gonda in contradistinction to 'Vedic'[96] — have become much more complex, concerned as they are here with temple *pūjā*. They have also acquired the theological theory of the *arcâvatāra*: Viṣṇu/Kṛṣṇa is present in the two types of temple sculpture, in the stone figure called the *mūla*, and in the metal figures, the *utsava-vigraha*. The impact of the Vedânta reveals itself not only in the combination of these forms of worship with the Vedic fire-sacrifice, Vedic *mantras*, and so on, but also in the conception of the act of *pūjā* as related to, or permeated by, *yoga* and as instrumental towards *mokṣa*. Again we find that the bhakti documented here corresponds to 'intellectual bhakti', though certain variations and developments are also noticeable.[97] However, this is a field of study to which

[92] See Gonda, 1969, pp. 234-62 for a summary of Vaikhānasa ritual which knows of the whole *materia* of folk-worship. The same, *a fortiori*, applies to the Pāñcarātra, see Goudriaan, 1965.

[93] Gonda, 1969, p. 234; 1970, p. 33.

[94] Schrader, 1973, pp. 16f and 22, note 2, on the other hand, describes it as spurious, and written by an outsider. Hacker, 1960, p. 62, dates it not before the fifth century AD.

[95] Schrader, 1973, pp. 23 and 110-4.

[96] Gonda, 1969, p. 241.

[97] For the *Nārāyaṇīya* see Gonda, 1948, pp. 633-7: 'Deze richting is in oorsprong zeker niet dezelfde als de zich om Kṛṣṇa kristalliserende leer die in de Gītā vertegenwoordigd is, maar er is in het tractaat in MBh 12 een tendenz om zich daaraan te conformeren. Zijn bhakti vertoont fundamentele overeenstemming met die van de Gītā . . .' (p. 633). On *brahma-nyāsa* among the Vaikhānasas see Gonda, 1970, p. 79, with note 224 on p. 187, 'mental concentration . . .'. On *nyāsa* in the

scholars have only just begun to pay serious attention: the date and provenance of this literature are anything but clear. Little more than general features can be pointed out; the flourishing period of the Pāñcarātra was *c.* AD 600-800 in Northern India,[98] and it had penetrated the South by about the eighth century.[99] Roughly by that date also the Vaikhānasas must have been settled in South India.[100] As always with anonymous literature in India, the books of these systems must be regarded rather as compilations of many generations than as works of individual authors. When we hear that *pūjā* is enjoined among the Vaikhānasas because it gives rise to a *rasa* in the worshipper,[101] or when in the *Ahirbudhnya-Saṃhitā* the fifth *aṅga* of *yoga*, viz., *pratyāhāra*, is defined also as 'dedication of the senses to Bhagavān'[102], there is every reason to assume that these are relatively late ideas, though we can certainly see here the impact of sensuous worship upon *yoga* and bhakti.

It is quite probable that some of this Vaikhānasa and Pāñcarātra material contains important evidence illustrating the development of emotionalism in bhakti, particularly on the basis of sensuous worship, and thus theoretically should be included in the discussion of northern sources (2.00, see below). But in order to avoid confusion, distortion, and mere guesswork due to our almost total ignorance in this area, I have preferred to ignore these systems — presumably a major *lacuna* in the picture delineated here. Due to the same uncertainty about provenance and dates of the sources, I have avoided labelling any of the material discussed below in 3.00 and 4.00[103] as 'Vaikhānasa' or 'Pāñcarātra'; but here the fact that the term or the concept of *vyūha* is nowhere expressed offers further

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Ahirbudhnya-Saṃhitā (ch. 37, 22ff) see Schrader, 1973, p. 147; it implies the total surrender to God.

98 Gonda, 1960, pp. 247f. Schrader, 1973, p. 111, says that the *Ahir°* was composed in Kashmir.

99 Gonda, 1963, p. 125.

100 Ibid., p. 126.

101 Ibid.: *'weil sie beim Verehrer eine bestimmte Emotion (rasa) auslösen und die Erlösung erreichbar machen können'*. No textual authority is mentioned by Gonda.

102 In ch. 32: *niveśanaṃ bhagavati* (Schrader, 1973, p. 142). I would doubt that, as Schrader (pp. 110f) seems to conclude, Utpala Vaiṣṇava's quoting the *°saṃhitā* establishes a *terminus ad quem* for all verses extant.

103 See in particular pp. 301f.

justification. But even if we are not able to identify the origin of the early stages of South Indian temple worship, its direct influence on the formation of emotional bhakti is amply illustrated in the Tamil sources.

1.5 Preparing the ground for a study of emotional bhakti: the problems

The summary of the various background and context areas which I have given above has taken us up to about the sixth century A.D. Not that the total situation up to that date has thereby been depicted; certain mythological developments which are immediately relevant to our study of emotionalism will be discussed separately in Part 2. On the other hand, the sketch given above has concentrated on mainstream features, on the normative ideology drawing a variety of religious expressions into its field of influence. Intellectual bhakti is typical of these developments, while those mythological developments lie on the whole outside.

Clearly, the material we have analysed so far is of a very different character from 'emotional bhakti' as it has been depicted in the opening section of this study. We may now ask where and when this latter variety of bhakti developed, or to be more precise, what Indological literature has said so far about this question. As we shall see presently, scholarship has as yet not arrived at an answer, but has at least paved the way towards one by formulating a precise question. But first of all it will be necessary to discuss another position, which refuses to accept (or is simply ignorant of the fact) that we are dealing with a real problem. Once the meaningfulness of the distinction between intellectual and emotional bhakti has been established, we can ask the following question: in which extant Sanskrit work does emotionalism make its first appearance? Finally, various suggestions as to the possible home of that bhakti prior to its appearance in that text can be summarized.

1.51 *Intellectual bhakti as distinct from emotional bhakti*

A number of scholars have interpreted forms of bhakti which I have described here as 'intellectual' in terms of emotionalism. If they were right, bhakti right from the beginning was 'emotional'

(in the sense of my definition), and it would be meaningless to speak of an 'intellectual' variety. Van Buitenen, for instance, paraphrases the character of Rāmānuja's bhakti in these terms: '. . . a mystic ecstasy of love so ardent that the aspirant cannot live for a moment separated from God; all his happiness depends on his contact with God.'[104] Esnoul says in very similar words: *'L'extase mystique où le fidèle se sent en contact avec Lui de façon si profonde, que rien ne peut plus l'en séparer et qu'il y trouve sa béatitude essentielle.'*[105]

Both authors refer to Rāmānuja's commentary on BhG IX, 34; but I am unable to discover such ecstatic overtones in that passage or in the verse commented upon. A careful analysis of Rāmānuja's bhakti would in fact reveal that it is very similar to the 'intellectual' bhakti of the *Gītā* (and the ViP, on which see below 2.4). In fact Śrīvaiṣṇavism makes it quite clear that bhakti is the strenuous affair of *yoga* exercises, and introduces as an 'easier' alternative *prapatti*, 'surrender in love'. Van Buitenen, aware of the close similarity of the bhakti in Rāmānuja and the *Gītā*, clarifies his position thus:

> This bhakti, a completely *un*intellectual devotion, a continuous flow of emotional religiosity . . . animated the religious life of the Vaiṣṇavas, ever since it had found its superb expression in the poetry of the Gītā.[106]

However, years before those statements Gonda had remarked:

> We shall be careful to avoid some stumbling-blocks over which others have fallen: it is, above all, inadmissible to identify bhakti of earlier periods with that of later ones, e.g., with that of Bengal Vaiṣṇavism, and to keep in mind that the stream of bhakti underwent a historical development, too, however much also essential elements have been preserved — a point stressed by the Indians themselves.[107]

Gonda applied these principles to his characterization of bhakti in the *Bhāgavata-Purāṇa*:

[104] 1968, p. 22.

[105] 1964, p. 121.

[106] 1968, p. 6 (my italics).

[107] 1948, p. 608: '*. . . zullen we trachten enige klippen te vermijden, waarop anderen wel gestoten zijn: het is, vooreerst, onjuist bhakti in vroegere perioden . . . te identificeren met de bhakti van latere tijden, bv. met die van het Bengaalse Viṣṇuisme, en over het hoofd te zien, dat ook de bhakti – "stroming" een ontwikkeling heefd doorgemaakt, hoezeer essentiële elementen—en daarop leggen de Indiërs zelf graag de nadruk — ook bewaard zijn gebleven.*' Compare pp. 621f.

Bhakti has entered here a *new stage, or perhaps better*, displays here aspects which in the older texts *did not, or less so*, become manifest, and these aspects were illustrated and stressed with a fervour and a conviction which can amaze the unprepared Western reader. Particularly in the life of the young herdsman god Kṛṣṇa a theory and practice of bhakti is developed in a very emotional and sensual poetry, which *differs* in its passion and emotionalism from the more speculative description of the earlier texts. Bhakti is here an overpowering, even suffocating emotion, which causes tears to flow and the voice to falter, and even, stimulates hysterical laughter, loss of consciousness, and trance.[108]

This is clearly very similar to the mysticism illustrated by Caitanya — emotional Kṛṣṇa bhakti. Unable to find anything like it in earlier texts, Gonda is tempted to speak of a 'new stage', but then shrinks back from the possibility of such a 'discontinuity' in the Indian religious tradition. But why, we can ask the Sanskritist Gonda, should 'continuity' be restricted to Sanskrit texts? However, I think that by now sufficient evidence has been collected to justify our basic distinction between an intellectual and an emotional variety of bhakti.

1.52 *The earliest Sanskrit text to illustrate emotionalism*

In a way, the last quotation already has suggested that the *Bhāgavata-Purāṇa* expresses for the first time, at least in Sanskrit, 'emotional Kṛṣṇa bhakti'. Farquhar stated categorically: 'What distinguishes it [the BhP] from all earlier literature is its *new theory* of bhakti.'[109] Listing a number of the symptoms of ecstasy mentioned in that work, he goes on to say: 'Thus the whole theory and practice of bhakti in this purāṇa is very different from the bhakti of the BhG and of Rāmānuja.'[110]

[108] Ibid., p. 640: *'De bhakti is hier in een nieuw stadium gekomen, mischien beter gezegd: vertoont hier aspecten die in de oudere teksten niet of minder aan het licht kwamen, en deze aspecten worden met een gloed en overtuiging belicht en geaccentueerd, die de onvoorbereide westerse lezer kan verbijsteren. In het bijzonder in het leven van de jonge herdersgod Kṛṣṇa wordt in zeer emotionele en zinnelijke poëzie een theorie en praktijk van een bhakti ontwikkeld, die door haar gepassioneerdheid en emotionalisme van de meer speculatieve beschrijvingen der oudere teksten afwijkt. Bhakti is hier een allesbeheersende, vaak verstikkende emotie die tranen doet vloeien en de stem doet stokken, ja, aanleiding geeft tot hysterische lachaanvallen, bewusteloosheid en trance.'*

[109] 1920, p. 229 (my italics).

[110] Ibid., p. 230.

But it was Hacker[111] who placed on firmer foundations the assumption that the BhP is the first text in Sanskrit to exemplify emotionalism. Choosing the figure of Prahlāda who in the *Purāṇas* is depicted as an ideal *bhakta*, he established a chronological order of the various purāṇic accounts dealing with him, and was able thereby to trace the development of bhakti. According to the picture that resulted from this approach, the *Viṣṇu-Purāṇa* is the last text to illustrate intellectual bhakti before the emotional type makes its mysterious first appearance in the *Bhāgavata-Purāṇa*. No intermediate stages seem to occur. Hacker's characterization of the two types of bhakti found in the two *Purāṇas* clearly brings out the fundamental difference between them. About the ViP he says:

> What Prahlāda is looking for is the 'highest', the 'quite different' (*para*) form of the god. He is not concerned with *seeing* the god. . . . Nor is he concerned with *feeling* the god — the art of savouring the deity through different nuances of feelings began with the BhP — . . . Prahlāda wants to possess the god through his *thinking*, his 'remembering'.[112]

Hacker lists[113] the various expressions found in the ViP passage which denote the act of bhakti. Reduced to their root-forms, we have: *smṛ* (± *anu*) 'to remember' (7 times); *man* (or *mati*) 'to think' (5 times); *cint* (± *sam*) 'to think' (4 times); *bhāvanā* 'meditation' (once). According to Hacker, even the following three expressions are metaphorical terms for this same intellectual bhakti: *nyasya hṛdayam* 'to sink one's heart (into Viṣṇu)'; *hṛdaye-nôḍvahan* and *hṛdayena dhṛ* 'to carry (Viṣṇu) in one's heart'.[114] He summarizes his analysis: 'This remembering, this thinking-of-Viṣṇu is on the whole what is meant here by bhakti.'[115] He refers to BhG VIII, 5-10 as the possible source for this terminology.[116]

[111] 1959, particularly pp. 93-147.

[112] Ibid., pp. 78f: *'Was Prahlāda sucht, ist die "höchste", die "ganz andere" (para) Gestalt des Gottes. Es geht ihm nicht darum, den Gott zu* schauen . . . *Es geht Prahlāda auch nicht darum, den Gott zu* empfinden – *die Kunst, die Gottheit . . . in . . . Gefühlsnuancen zu genießen, begann mit dem BhP – . . . Prahlāda will im* Denken, *im "Gedenken" . . . den Gott besitzen.'*

[113] Ibid., p. 93, notes 2-7.

[114] Ibid., p. 93, with note 6.

[115] Ibid.

[116] 5a: *smaran*; 6a: *smaran*; 7a: *anusmara*; 8a: *cetasā*; 8b: *anucintayan*; 9a: *anusmared.*

When Hacker sketches the difference between the bhakti of the ViP and the BhP, he uses the two key words 'knowledge' and 'emotion'.[117] He goes on to describe the bhakti of the BhP as 'more intense and considerably more emotional than it had been in the ViP'.[118] In one of the passages quoted by Hacker we hear of *rati* 'passion', *graha* 'possession (by Kṛṣṇa)',[119] *utpulaka* 'horripilation', and *praṇayânanda* 'bliss of love';[120] Prahlāda is totally oblivious to the outside world, he weeps and laughs, sings hymns and dances, and imitates Kṛṣṇa's deeds. With reference to a similar passage Hacker says:

> It appears to be the special intent of the poet of our legend to show that all bhakti-exercises can, and should, lead to a condition which is something different, something still more than bhakti.[121] For this poet desires the heated *emotion*; the bhakti in the manner of the ViP-Prahlāda is, on the other hand, more an intellectual than an emotional attitude.[122]

Hacker now shows that the ViP, and none of the other *Purāṇas*, was the sole source for the BhP.[123] He assumes a gap of about two hundred years between the two works, and places the BhP in the late eighth or early ninth century AD.[124]

Some remarks of Ruben only seemingly fill the gap between the ViP and the BhP. He postulates that a passage in the *Padma-Purāṇa* (VI, 272ff) intervenes chronologically between the two other *Purāṇas*.[125] However, this version of the *Kṛṣṇa-carita* not only throws no light on the development of bhakti, but it is also much more likely to be a later production;[126] thus we can ignore it here.

[117] 1959, p. 109 (Erkenntnis, Gefühl).

[118] Ibid., p. 116.

[119] Ibid., p. 117, note 2.

[120] Ibid., notes 1-5.

[121] I presume Hacker uses the word 'bhakti' in the sense of intellectual bhakti or *bhakti-yoga*.

[122] 1959, pp. 146f: *'Es scheint das besondere Anliegen des Dichters unserer Legende zu sein, zu zeigen, daß alle Bhakti-Übungen zu einem Zustand führen können und sollen, der noch etwas anderes, noch mehr ist als Bhakti. Denn dieser Dichter will die erhitzte* Emotion; *die Bhakti nach der Art des ViP-Prahlada . . . ist aber eine Haltung mehr des Intellekts als des Gefühls.'*

[123] Ibid., p. 111, note 1; p. 224.

[124] Ibid., pp. 127f.

[125] 1944, p. 271.

[126] The whole passage VI, 252-282 is of a pronounced Śrīvaiṣṇava character (which also explains the archaism of the Kṛṣṇa-story that induced Ruben to place

1.53 *Emotional bhakti possibly derived from the Āḻvārs*

Thus it has emerged as fairly certain that the BhP is the first work in Sanskrit to illustrate the new stage in the development of bhakti which I have called 'emotional'. At the same time, it has become clear that the background to this bhakti is mysterious. While it is easy to link the bhakti of the ViP with earlier works like the BhG, and to show that the ViP served as the *literary* model for the BhP, emotionalism has remained unexplained.

Certain suggestions have, however, been made as to the possible source from which the BhP derived its bhakti. As early as 1911, Govindâcārya[127] drew attention to the verses BhP XI, 5, 38-40 and identified the Vaiṣṇava saints of South India, whom this 'prophecy' mentions, with the Āḻvārs.[128] This was taken up by Bhandarkar in 1913[129], but he obscured the issue considerably.[130] Farquhar (1920) made a more positive contribution by pointing out the similarities of the BhP with the Āḻvārs; he assumed that a Bhāgavata community in South India related to the Āḻvārs had been responsible for this *Purāṇa*.[131] Unfortunately he has little new to say about the Āḻvārs themselves, remaining like Bhandarkar on the level of hagiography.[132] When in 1929 Hooper's anthology, *Hymns of the Āḻvārs*, appeared, this proved to have a paralysing effect on subsequent scholarship. Since it seemed now that the religion of the Āḻvārs was 'known' through this anthology, which was assumed to be representative, no further serious research was undertaken. (We must not forget here that the study of Tamil has been one of the more marginal and esoteric branches of Indology . . .) Hooper's ideological bias, the extreme onesidedness of his selection, and his ignorance of the cultural background of the Āḻvārs, remained unnoticed, and practically all scholars during

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it just after the ViP). A likely date is thus between AD 1000 and 1200 (Vedântadeśika quotes from ch. 254).

127 1911a, pp. 949f. This identification is however untenable: see Appendix XI, 5 below.

128 On these verses see Appendix XI, 5 below.

129 1913, pp. 48-50.

130 He identified quite arbitrarily the Āḻvār Kulaśekhara with a king Kulaśekharâṅka mentioned in an inscription of the twelfth century AD and with the author of the *Mukundamālā*, in which *stotra* he moreover thought to have found a quotation from the BhP. For details see p. . . . note 56.

131 1920, pp. 233f.

132 Ibid., 187f.

the next decades, when referring to the Āḻvārs, based their statements on Hooper's booklet.[133] One example may suffice: even a serious scholar like Vaudeville arrives at conclusions on the basis of Hooper which are unacceptable.[134] Das Gupta hardly added to our understanding of the Āḻvārs by paraphrasing stanzas of a verse-summary of Nammāḻvār's *Tiruvāymoḻi*[135] which are removed from the original perhaps by as much as one millennium and which, without recourse to it, have to remain incomprehensible.

Relying principally on Farquhar, Hooper, and Das Gupta, more recent authors have not gone much further than vague statements like the following:

> The BhP was the ripe fruit of the Āḻvār-Vaiṣṇava renaissance and bears the indelible impress of the living mystical experience of the Āḻvārs. . .[136]

> The BhP is a compendium of profound and mature mystical experiences of devotion to a loving God such as the God-intoxicated Āḻvārs felt.[137]

> *Les éléments de la légende de Kṛṣṇa auxquels se réfèrent les Āḻvār, notamment Periyâḻvār, sont justement tels que les présente le BhP.*[138]

> *. . . des Āḻvār dont la poésie ardente était bien de nature à inspirer le poète du BhP.*[139]

> *Unabweislich [irrefutable] ist der Schluß daß das BhP die Āḻvārs nicht voraussetzt.*[140]

[133] Even apparent inconsistencies in the work were never noticed. See, for example, on p. 18 the statement (which is derived from Farquhar): 'The kind of bhakti described in the BhP is precisely that of the Āḻvārs'; whereas the stanzas translated by Hooper could hardly justify such a claim.

[134] 1968, p. 754: *'Mais si leur* [= Āḻvārs] *dévotion à Kṛṣṇa-Gopāla est empreinte de sentimentalité et parfois . . . de passion, il ne s'y mêle aucun éroticisme. La tendresse des Gopīs pour Kṛṣṇa est fréquemment evoquée, mais non la licence qui caractérise les récits du* rāsa-līlā *dans le Harivaṃśa et le ViP. Cet aspect de la légende du dieu bouvier, à l'époque des Āḻvārs, n'est pas encore integré à la bhakti vishnouite'*; similarly 1975, p. 109.

[135] 1940, pp. 69-74.

[136] Mukerjee, 1957, p. 64.

[137] Ibid., p. 83.

[138] Filliozat, 1962, p. 74. Note the *justement*, or Hooper's *precisely* (in note 133), which seem to be expressions of scholars who are anxious to state that no further proof is required.

[139] Ibid.

[140] Gail, 1969, pp. 13f. A number of Gail's very dubious conclusions are based on the totally uncritical booklet of Varadachari, 1966.

> The writings of the *Āḻvārs* . . . have much in common with the BhP.[141]

My criticism here does not necessarily concern the content of all these statements, but the fact that they are never substantiated by any critical investigation of the works talked about, carrying on almost like a sacred tradition.

A systematic study of the works of the Āḻvārs appears urgently needed, quite apart from the possible light this might throw on the bhakti of the BhP.

1.6 Arrangement of the present study

This brief summary of the results, suggestions, and questions which Indological scholarship has produced till now provides clear directives for further research. The *Bhāgavata-Purāṇa* has shown itself to be the crucial text, at least within the Sanskrit tradition. While it is relatively easy to show that practically all manifestations of emotional Kṛṣṇa bhakti in the North, including Caitanya, can be connected with this work, its background and origin await elucidation. Part 5 will investigate these questions. But not all aspects of this *Purāṇa* are as obscure as its emotionalism; many of its Kṛṣṇa myths are in fact known from earlier sources. For a number of reasons it appears appropriate to begin our investigation with these myths. This will allow us to verify our assumption concerning the chronology of emotional Kṛṣṇa bhakti, which we shall never encounter in connection with these earlier versions of the Kṛṣṇa story. Moreover, in view of our analysis of the Ālvārs, it will be very useful to possess a fairly comprehensive chronological picture of individual *motifs*: this will enable us to determine the kind of stimuli South India could have received. Finally, any form of ecstatic religion resorts to a mythology which is essential for the interpretation of that religion; as we have seen above, I have included in my definition of emotional Kṛṣṇa bhakti the level of mythology. The purpose which the mythological survey in Part 2 is meant to serve is best achieved by making this survey as complete as possible, because in that way we will not only avoid wrong judgements concerning the 'originality' of the BhP, but will also be able to obtain a clear picture of how, by contrast,

[141] Rukmani, 1970, p. 10; pp. 220-31, though dealing specifically with the relationship between the Āḻvārs and the BhP, hardly goes beyond similar platitudes.

avoidance, and selective choice, the level of myth in Kṛṣṇa emotionalism developed. Thus I have taken into account sources not only in Sanskrit, but also in Prakrit and Apabhraṃśa, and not only strictly religious but also secular material. With this kind of picture in mind, we must then turn to completely unexplored regions, viz., to South Indian religion. Since however the spirituality of the Āḻvārs will remain completely incomprehensible without knowledge of their cultural and religious background, Part 3 will attempt to depict the most essential factors of it. Unfortunately most of the field work still has to be done, and it is inevitable that this survey will in many ways be tentative, incomplete, and certainly very complex. We shall have to investigate Kṛṣṇa mythology in its Southern treatment, the indigenous religion, ancient Tamil poetry (the conventions of which contributed to the 'poetic level' in the Āḻvārs' emotional bhakti), and the development of Kṛṣṇaism in general. After this preparation, Part 4 can then turn to the Āḻvārs themselves, with whom we witness the development of emotional bhakti for the first time, as a regional expression through the medium of the Tamil language. Naturally it will not be possible to deal with the full range of Āḻvār thought, sentiment, and artistic expression; but the material directly relevant to our study of emotional bhakti is ample enough. The overall picture we can obtain shows that Kṛṣṇa emotionalism constitutes the result of Northern stimuli fertilizing the autonomous Tamil cultural and religious scene and producing what might well be called a new religion. The results of Parts 2 and 4 make it now easy to determine what is new in the BhP, and that this work is in fact an attempt to render in Sanskrit (and that means *inter alia* to make available for the whole of India) the religion of the Āḻvārs. This final result might surprise even Indologists who have only recently begun to become aware of the existence of an autonomous cultural tradition in Tamil, who are used to regard all vernacular phenomena as regional dilutions of Sanskrit models, and who will certainly find it hard to concede that in our case the reverse applies, viz., that the character of intellectual bhakti was completely transformed under the influence of a regional, vernacular religion.[142]

[142] Compare Gonda, 1948, p. 640 (quoted above p. 38); as a Sanskritist, he clearly finds it difficult to acknowledge emotional bhakti as *new*, and not already present in some form in the Vedas. Compare Gonda, 1960, pp. 215, 244.

The discussion of the BhP concludes the range of our investigation. But since it will have proceeded very laboriously, focusing on problems of dates, provenances, milieux, chains of influence, and textual criticism, and resting only twice in order to look at the structure of the bhakti exemplified by the Āḻvārs and the BhP, Part 6 will attempt once again to look at the phenomenon of emotional Kṛṣṇa bhakti from a general perspective. This includes suggestions for a comparative evaluation and interpretation of this kind of religious attitude, and glimpses of the manifold and often very fascinating further developments of Kṛṣṇa emotionalism after the BhP.

One further point has to be touched upon here. The overall picture which this study presents may well contain certain *lacunae*. I have mentioned already above that the almost unexplored field of Pāñcarātra and Vaikhānasa literature could possibly throw further light on how bhakti, in a specific temple setting, was introduced to South India. Another, more obvious and probably far more important, *lacuna* is Śaivism. Particularly in South India it developed along parallel lines with Vaiṣṇavism, and a certain interaction and influence of one upon the other is more than likely. But the available material (*Purāṇas*, *Āgamas*, hymns of the Nāyaṉārs, and so on) is far more extensive than what has been investigated for Kṛṣṇaism.[143] Scholarship has not yet prepared the ground for a critical and reliable picture of the complex Śaivite situation which would allow for safe comparisons and reasonable theories. I do believe however that emotional bhakti (as defined here) is in fact original to Kṛṣṇaism, and when found in facets of Śaivism, particularly in the Nāyaṉārs, can be regarded as secondary or derivative.[144] I have nevertheless tried in three or four cases to substantiate this claim.[145] In a few cases ethnographic data have been taken into account, but it may be felt that far too little attention has been paid to iconography and epigraphy. But it appears to me that this kind of material is available only on a very limited scale for the period with which we are on the whole

[143] The whole *Tirumuṟai* of the Nāyaṉārs is five times as large as the *Prabandham* of the Āḻvārs.

[144] The case of Murukaṉ (—Skanda) is different, and has been taken into account in Part 3.

[145] See in particular 3.66; 4.314; 4.323.

concerned, and is even then not very illuminating.[146] But I cannot predict the results a systematic study of the inscriptions at temples about which the Āḻvārs have sung would yield; it would certainly be a major undertaking.

1.7 Emotional bhakti — a neglected phenomenon

As conclusion to this introductory part, I shall briefly turn to a question which by now might have arisen in the reader's mind: *why* has the phenomenon of emotionalism not been studied more extensively? We may first look at some of the more serious answers to this. Normative ideology (on the premises outlined in 1.41) has always tried to reject any outburst of emotionalism; the transition from the Āḻvārs to Śrīvaiṣṇavism is a typical example. After this ideology aligned itself with Śaṅkara's *advaita-Vedânta*, it would claim that any other form of religion is superseded by *advaita*,[147] which prevented it from manifesting its distinctiveness. At the most, a theory of three *mārgas*, which included the *bhakti-mārga*, was proclaimed and artificially read back into the *Gītā*.[148] The main intellectual opponent of *advaita-Vedânta*, Rāmānuja's Śrīvaiṣṇavism, had itself eliminated most elements of emotionalism from its Āḻvār heritage, so that there was again no occasion to grasp it conceptually: bhakti is the *yoga* of the *Gītā*, and *prapatti* an elaboration upon the concept of *karmanyāsa* in the same text. Western scholars have only recently turned their attention to emotional bhakti. I refer here to Vaudeville,[149] who has given very brief surveys of the whole complex, but concentrating on the post-BhP period; she has given it the label 'love-symbolism'.

[146] See Figure I: is the *gopī* Rādhā, Piṉṉai, or just any *gopī*? Vaudeville (1975, p. 115) gives no proof for her identification of the girl with Piṉṉai.

[147] Raghavan, 1966a, represents an illuminating modern example of this approach. The 565 songs of the Telugu *bhakti* poet Tyāgarāja are arranged here to culminate in *advaita-bhāva*, although even the five songs, which Raghavan can find for that category, hardly fit.

[148] A description of bhakti has been given above; the *karma-yoga* of the *Gītā* is nothing but the dedication of all one's activities to Kṛṣṇa, while *jñāna-yoga* means to come to know Kṛṣṇa fully through meditational exercises. They are not different *mārgas*, but facets of one complex (see 1.42, with note 70).

[149] 1962a; 1968; 1975; these papers contain extensive bibliographies of the earlier literature. But the South Indian situation is described only on the basis of the authors mentioned above, pp. 41f.

However, there have been others — I am turning now to what at least today is the more amusing answer to the question — who have not accepted the *advaita* claim that all other forms of religion can be subsumed in it and who have taken a positive attitude towards theism, the Christian missionaries. Given the sentiments of the time (1900-1930), we may not be surprised to find that their attitude towards emotional Kṛṣṇa bhakti (after all, note the attribute 'erotic' in my definition!) hardly differs from that of the normative ideology. I may mention here some of their pronouncements.

The BhP, in spite of the high praise it was given for its intense love of God, figures as a kind of pet enemy in other respects. Thus Hooper wrote:

> The BhP however appears to have gone further in the less worthy directions that are associated with the later bhakti movement than do the Āḻvār hymns. . . From the standpoint of religion it would appear to mark a perversion, which is by no means so definite in the Tamil works.[150]

Or again:

> Figures drawn from the sex relationship are employed to illustrate this extraordinary exhilaration and, especially in the later developments of bhakti, this became the most dangerous element of the movement. In the Āḻvārs, speaking generally, the erotic expression is not too gross.[151]

Like Hooper, Abbott betrays a liking for the bhakti saints and at the same time a bad conscience about it, which he, again like Hooper, relieves by putting all the blame on the BhP:

> There has been, however, another stream of thought [other than the BhG stream] that has made the most of the details of Kṛṣṇa's early life, as described in the BhP. As this stream flowed it gathered into it cesspools of thought, sewerage of imaginations, until its revolting outflow into depraved cults and debasing literature, shocks the moral sense.[152]

But Indian writers too have seen it in similar terms. Bhandarkar, writing sixteen years earlier, says:

[150] 1929, pp. 18f.

[151] Ibid., p. 25. Hooper made sure that none of these perversions appeared in his anthology. 4.32-36 below give a fairly complete picture of Āḻvār eroticism.

[152] 1929, p. xi. Abbott seems to be ignorant of the various versions of the *Kṛṣṇa-carita* attributed to Nāmdev and Tukārām.

> The dalliance of Kṛṣṇa with cowherdesses, which introduced an element inconsistent with the advance of morality into the Vāsudeva religion, was . . . an after-growth, consequent upon the freer intercourse between the wandering Ābhīras and their more civilised Āryan neighbours. Morality cannot be expected to be high or strict among races in the condition of the Ābhīras at the time; and their gay neighbours took advantage of its looseness.[153]

But times have changed since then, in fact so rapidly that Kṛṣṇa eroticism will hardly excite anybody today in view of the much harder stuff of Tantrism. No longer *eros*, but *sex*, to the extent that the great prophet of Tantrism in the Anglo-Saxon world, P. Rawson, can even tell the good old puritan Indian tantrics where they threw up the sponge and yielded to normative pressures.[154] However, between the fright at the erotic or emotional and the excitement over sex I believe there exists a precarious moment of unfashionable repose which may allow for a description of emotional Kṛṣṇa bhakti in what may be but illusory or irrelevant 'objective' terms.

[153] 1913, p. 38. Instead of putting the blame on an 'Āryan' work like the BhP, he puts it — obviously — on foreigners like the Ābhīras.

[154] 1973, e.g., p. 31. Talking about various ways in which, in India and elsewhere, the sexual libido and sensuous pleasures are inhibited, he writes: 'All of these activities represent the cult of what one may call the "sexual misers" which has gained such a powerful hold in India. According to it every individual develops his psycho-sexual energy for his own spiritual benefit; . . . In spite of its cult of "enjoyment" some Tantra still keeps very strictly to this asceticism, especially the Buddhist Tantra of Tibet, which makes a vital issue of treasuring . . . the semen. Tantra which has been rigorously vetted by Brahmin prejudice also makes a great point of such energy-hoarding.'

PART TWO

The Myths of Kṛṣṇa and the Milkmaids in Northern Literature (up to the Eleventh Century)

2.1 Introduction

From I. M. Lewis's colourful survey of ecstatic religion it becomes apparent that ecstasy is intimately connected with a system of myths.[1] Both the symbols which are commonly used in the description of ecstasy, viz. the belief in 'soul-loss' and in possession by a 'spirit',[2] can be considered as mythical. Man's soul, which leaves him during the state of ecstasy, travels through hidden regions of the cosmos, and the spirit which possesses him belongs to a hierarchy or congregation of such supernatural beings; the realms through which the soul travels and the host of those spirits both belong to a mythological system. Moreover, human affliction which, in a challenging manner, makes itself publicly known *inter alia* as 'spirit-possession', is cured through ecstasy when that myth is therapeutically re-enacted.[3]

Kṛṣṇa emotionalism represents a highly interesting variation of the pattern which Lewis has established. But it differs from that pattern in some significant points precisely because of a fundamental difference in its mythology, as will be shown below.[4] The blueprint of the mythology underlying emotional Kṛṣṇa bhakti was developed in North India. The myths make reference to the river Yamunā, the town Mathurā, the forests in their environment, and the cowherds living there; they are documented in Northern sources from the early centuries AD onwards. Somewhat modified in the Tamil South, they were then made by the Āḻvārs the mythological basis of their emotional bhakti. Part 2 will explore the developments of the blueprint in so far as they can be reconstructed from the extant Northern sources.

[1] See Lewis, 1975; in particular pp. 127-77.
[2] Ibid., pp. 44ff.
[3] Ibid., p. 193.
[4] See section 6.4.

2.11 *The motifs of the myths*

In the myths about Kṛṣṇa's childhood among the cowherds in the forests around Mathurā, the *gopīs* and their amorous relationship with Kṛṣṇa figure as the most important theme from the point of view of emotional bhakti. This theme appears with two facets, viz. 'union' and 'separation'. The first facet concerns their love-making and has become stylized in the symbol of the dance; the second one arises when Kṛṣṇa has gone away to Mathurā and left the *gopīs* behind. A third facet is woven into these two; it is the theme of temporary separation, e.g., when Kṛṣṇa is quarrelling with a particular *gopī*, or when he has gone away for the day to graze the cattle. These three motifs are, however, the result and constitute the fusion, of partly independent historical developments and partly separate milieux, to trace which is the aim of the following pages.

We find two consistently distinct variants of the *gopī* theme. One looks at the *gopīs* as an anonymous group of girls, while the other singles out one particular girl, making her Kṛṣṇa's favourite and referring to her by name, viz. as Rādhikā. They are part of two clearly separate mythological traditions. Unaware of this situation, previous scholars have struggled with the 'Rādhikā problem' without finding a solution to it.[5]

The earlier sources concentrate on the *gopīs*' union with Kṛṣṇa, while there are traces also of the theme 'temporary separation'. The development of the dance motif is a fascinating illustration of the very complex pattern of interaction of many diverse factors in the Indian history of myths. Our sources appear to suggest the *possibility* that the theme of Kṛṣṇa's dance with the milkmaids became associated with the myth almost accidentally: inspired by a dramatic routine piece in a play on the young Kṛṣṇa, a later writer regarded the dance as a genuine component of the cycle of myths, and resorting to contemporary folk art in the vernacular for further inspiration, treated Kṛṣṇa's union with the girls in terms of the *rāsa* dance.

[5] Winternitz, 1909 (Vol. 1), p. 466, note 2, created considerable confusion by stating that Rādhā is mentioned for the first time in the BhP. This is repeated by Gonda, 1960, p. 239 note 18 (but compare Gonda, 1963, p. 152). Ruben, 1944, p. 271, assumes that the *Padma-Purāṇa* passage VI, 272ff is earlier than the BhP, *because* Rādhā is not mentioned in the former.

Temporary separation applies more logically to one *gopī*, particularly when it is caused by a love-quarrel. Thus it is not surprising to find that the tradition which knew of Rādhikā expresses this theme, once before AD 500, and during the following centuries more and more frequently.

Final separation is implied in the myths themselves, since Kṛṣṇa departed from the cowherds to Mathurā and never returned to them; he did not take any of the *gopīs* with him. However, this was a difficult point, difficult in terms of Indian sentiments and culture. Such a theme is unknown in Indian love poetry, and there is always a happy ending to a drama or an epic. Accordingly, the earlier accounts of the myth ignored the implication, until a courageous poet, sensitive to the emotions of women (and to make matters more difficult, of low-caste cowherd girls!), dealt with it. That this happened in a religious work, which both the *Brahma-* and the *Viṣṇu-Purāṇa* incorporated, and which is the one that introduced the *rāsa* dance, is particularly interesting. Even by the end of the first millennium very few poets repeated this treatment of final separation of the *gopīs* (although they were slightly less reluctant about the *rāsa* dance).

Quite a variety of segments of Indian society and of cultural traditions were involved in the development of these various mythological themes and their literary treatment. Although probably of tribal origin,[6] the myth of Kṛṣṇa and the *gopīs* attracted a number of poets (in the vernacular, and then in Sanskrit); it gained stature through a Sanskrit epic writer (and possibly a dramatist); enriched by further facets derived from vernacular folk culture, it became hallowed as an integrally religious story. Even ignoring the South Indian contributions here, we are surely dealing with a cosmopolitan net of interactions.

[6] A large amount of earlier literature has pursued the question of Kṛṣṇa's origin, aiming at the reconstruction of an Ur-Kṛṣṇa, or in fact, a number of different Ur-Kṛṣṇas. It is said that he was a 'rain', 'child', 'herdsmen', 'fertility', 'sun' or 'moon' god, a tribal leader, religious teacher, etc. Most of the literature is referred to in Vaudeville, 1968; 1975; for a criticism of this approach see Gonda, 1960, p. 51. Instead of extrapolating from our extant sources and trying to go beyond them into the past, my analysis will begin where the extant sources begin. However, in order to show that the life-style and value-system which the early versions of the myth manifest are quite congruous with those of certain segments of Indian society, I shall provide a brief sketch of a modern tribal society — presumably totally unrelated in any historical sense to Kṛṣṇa's 'tribe'— which is concerned with cattle-rearing; see note 71 below.

When defining the complex structure of emotional Kṛṣṇa bhakti (see 1.2 above), a level of *poetic* symbols was mentioned. In the North, by the latter half of the first millennium, such an autonomous realm of imagination had evolved which was inhabited by particular symbols, whose behaviour and interaction followed the rules of Sanskrit poetics. The vast majority of the sources which will be discussed in Part 2 do in fact belong to that cosmos of symbols, or at least are part of earlier stages in its development. However some of our sources belong to other systems of poetic symbolism of regional occurrence. But since none of these poetic 'landscapes' were of direct importance for the original development of emotional Kṛṣṇa bhakti, they will be discussed only to the extent necessary for the interpretation of individual source fragments. Only the *Bhāgavata-Purāṇa* will make more extensive use, for example, of ecstasy as a poetic erotic symbol.

2.12 *The connection with Kṛṣṇa religion*

The stories about Kṛṣṇa and his love-making with the *gopīs* seem to offer few points of contact with early Kṛṣṇaism (as it has been characterized in 1.42). The speaker of the *Gītā* had said:

> For whenever the law of righteousness withers away and lawlessness arises, then do I generate myself [on earth]. For the protection of the good, for the destruction of evil-doers, for the setting up of the law of righteousness I come into being age after age. Who knows my godly birth and mode of operation thus as they really are, he, his body left behind, is never born again: he comes to me.[7]

To protect *dharma* and those who practise it, and to destroy *adharma* and its adherents, Kṛṣṇa manifests himself in space, time and matter. By obtaining *jñāna* through concentrating in *yoga* on him, Kṛṣṇa's real nature beyond space, time and matter is perceived, and as the consequence of that knowledge *mokṣa*, viz. being with him, is achieved. But the Kṛṣṇa of Vraja shows little concern for the protection of *dharma* and indulges in love-affairs; the girls violate the law of righteousness, their *jñāna* being carnal knowledge, and never see Kṛṣṇa again, once he has gone to Mathurā. It seems a difficult task to harmonize these two facets of Kṛṣṇa.

The fact that Kṛṣṇa grew up among the cowherds of Vraja is

[7] BhG IV, 7-9 (trans. by Zaehner).

known to older sources, e.g. to Jain texts, the *Jātakas*, the old layers of the *Purāṇa-Pañcalakṣaṇa*, and the *Mahābhārata*, by the second or third century BC. Thus when during the first few centuries AD his affairs with the *gopīs* also became more widely known, the older stories about his youth in Vraja provided a convenient slot into which these new stories could be inserted. The whole cycle of myths could then participate in the general theological developments which were reflected in the *Purāṇas*, after it had been appended to the *Mahābhārata*.

But all this constitutes no more than a purely formal solution. The question remained, how the particular episode of his love-making had to be interpreted in the light of the religious attitudes expressed in the *Gītā*, etc. How should the devotee react to the *gopī* myth, how should he re-enact it? Naturally, in so far as the sources to be discussed in the following pages belong to secular traditions, they will not throw light on how that problem was approached. The religious ones, on the other hand, indicate an intense struggle, in which not only the normative ideology played an important role, but also other types of religious interpretation were involved. Emotional bhakti lies however outside the horizon of all the sources analysed here. But it is particularly interesting that a relatively early work in Sanskrit (the *Harivaṃśa*) sketches in a few strokes a religious interpretation of the *gopī* myth which, although ignored by the later works mentioned in Part 2, contributed to the development of emotional bhakti in the South.

2.13 *Arrangement*

Most of the earlier source fragments discussed here require a detailed analysis concerning their date, provenance, text, and (where applicable) religious attitude. This makes a systematic arrangement difficult, and therefore each text is discussed separately. A monolinear chronological arrangement would have obscured one of our important findings, viz. that we are dealing with distinct traditions: a secular, a literary-religious, and a religious tradition. Thus the overall arrangement makes use of that distinction, while within each category the chronological sequence, as far as possible, has been preserved. Finally, a group of thirty-eight fragments which belong to our first category, but are of minor importance and of a later date, have been dealt with separately in section 2.5.

2.2 The secular poetic tradition I: until AD 500

In this section we shall look at the references made by three poets, Hāla, Kālidāsa, and Śyāmilaka, to the *gopīs*. Since Hāla's stanzas are presumably the oldest extant sources of the story, we may begin here with this section, and discuss the *Harivaṃśa* of a somewhat later date, in the following section. Hāla was one of the Śātavāhana kings who ruled over the Deccan between 235 BC and AD 225, while the other two were probably poets at the court of the Guptas, whose empire flourished between AD *c.* 285 and 525. To label them 'secular poets' might be objected to, but this is not the place to enter into an elaborate justification; thus the term 'secular' is used merely to distinguish this tradition from the other two which are *more* interested in religious matters. Later sources which also fall into the present category are discussed in 2.5 and 5.5.

2.21 *Hāla's Sattasaī*

The *gāthā* in the *āryā* metre is an old poetic form of vernacular religious poetry.[8] Presumably in the Sātavāhana empire it was developed to serve as the formal means of love poetry in the local dialect, Māhārāṣṭrī Prakrit. An anthology of this poetry has been preserved under the title *Sattasaī* (viz. Skt. *Saptaśatī*), a name indicating that it was meant to contain about 700 stanzas. The various recensions[9] available now know of almost a thousand different poems, while they have only about 430 stanzas in common. It appears reasonable to assume that this group of about 430 verses constitutes the oldest portion of the collection.[10] The three *gāthās* which mention the *gopīs* belong to this group.

One of the opening stanzas refers to Hāla as the compiler: 'Among crores [of existing Prakrit verses] Hāla, the patron of poets, collected seven hundred *gāthās* endowed with poetic em-

[8] Pālī *gāthās* are found for example in the *Jātakas* and in the *Thēra*-and *Thērīgāthās*; the Jain canon contains passages in the *āryā* metre employing Ārdhamāgadhī, etc.

[9] Weber does not comment on the dates of the various recensions; since MSS π and W refer to the terminology of the *Dhvanyāloka* (see Weber, 1881, pp. 310, 503), they must be later than AD 850.

[10] Weber distinguishes a *Vulgate* and a number of other, more independent recen-

bellishments.'[11] The date of this Śātavāhana king Hāla has been discussed frequently,[12] but for our purposes it will be sufficient to assume the third century AD as the *terminus ad quem* for the stanzas referring to the *gopīs*.[13]

The stanzas of the anthology belong to the Deccan,[14] and thus to an area more than five hundred miles distant from Mathurā. Also the milieu it depicts is different from a tribal or herdsmen environment,[15] and in fact it seems that the milieu which produced the poems again differs to some extent from the one it depicts:[16] provincial, 'bourgeois' poets describe with sympathy, humour, amusement, with a certain sense of superiority but also of envy, the life of their more rustic environment and neighbours. What they are interested in are, above everything else, the matters of love, and the erotic character of the anthology is so pronounced that it can even claim: 'Those who cannot read or understand immortal

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sions. A verse is most likely to be 'authentic' when found in the *Vulgate* and in all other recensions. For details see Weber, 1881, pp. xlvi-l.

[11] *Gāthā* 3: *satta-saāiṃ kai-va'cchaleṇa koḍīa majjhaāraṃmi|*
Hāleṇa viraiāiṃ' sâlaṃkārāṇa gāhāṇaṃ.||

[12] On Hāla as Śātavāhana king see Weber, 1870, pp. If and *contra* Weber, 1881, pp. x-xvi; Patwardhan, 1969, pp. xviiif.504 (of Notes). On AD 225 as the date of the dynasty's termination see Sewell, 1932, p. 324; Nilakanta Sastri, 1966, pp. 99, 108; Winternitz III, 1920, pp. 102f, etc. Weber himself (1881, pp. xivf), following Lassen, placed the beginning of the dynasty too late, viz. 21 BC; Jacobi, 1886, p. xv, suggested AD 467 as the date of Hāla, which is far too late. Since Hāla is mentioned in purāṇic lists of Śātavāhana kings (see Pargiter, 1931 pp. 36.71), various dates have been calculated: AD 69 (Sewell, 1932, p. 324); AD 20-24 (Nilakanta Sastri, 1966, p. 94), etc. Keith (1928, pp. 223f) and Woolner (1928, pp. 85f) reject these as too early and suggest the third century AD as the date for the (authentic material in the) anthology. Norman, 1977, p. 304: 'second century AD'.

[13] My argument rests on the fact that the three relevant *gāthās* are found in *all* recensions, and on the assumption that at least in essence the connection of Hāla's (original) *Sattasaī* with the Śātavāhanas is based on historical facts.

[14] See Weber, 1881, p. xvi, and the *Wortindex ss. vv. Ṇammaā, Tāvī, Goḍā, Golā, Godā*, and *Viṃjha*. The Yamunā is mentioned in one stanza, 671 (missing in three MSS), but only in a poetic comparison.

[15] We hear frequently of farmers, hunters, travellers — and dacoits; polygamy is mentioned often. Only ten stanzas have anything to do with cows. 639 (possibly spurious) mentions a *gova* 'cowherd', but clearly not as a mythical figure. Five other verses are Kṛṣṇaite; three just refer to cows or bulls or stables (460.611.640). On 128, see note 26 below.

[16] Compare Winternitz III, 1920, pp. 97f; Keith, 1928, p. 224. Weber (1870, pp. 14f) over-emphasized the 'folk' character of the anthology.

Prakrit poetry, and [yet] "heat their brains"[17] about the essence[18] of love, how do they not feel ashamed!'[19]

This is precisely the point of contact between the poets of the *Sattasaī* and the story of Kṛṣṇa and the *gopīs*. Wherever they may have heard about it,[20] they mention it because of its eroticism, and not because they are interested in herdsmen or in Kṛṣṇa the speaker of the *Gītā*.

2.211 *Three authentic stanzas*

There are three poems which are found in all MSS and thus can be assumed to belong to the oldest layer of the anthology.

Kṛṣṇa! When you remove with the breath of your mouth a particle of dust from Rādhikā's [eye], you take away at the same time the pride of these other milkmaids. [21]

This is a pun on the two meanings of the Prakrit word *goraa*, 'pride' and 'particle of dust'. The other *gopīs* feel humiliated, because Kṛṣṇa favours Rādhikā in such an obvious manner.

When Yaśodā was saying: 'Dāmôdara is still a child', the women of Vraja secretly laughed, turning their eyes towards Kṛṣṇa's face.[22]

[17] I take *tattī* as corresponding to Skt. *tapti*; the commentators (e.g. *ad* 51, 273, 833, 866) paraphrase it through *cintā*. My translation tries to combine the etymological sense ('heat') with the meaning of *cintā* ('anxiety').

[18] This should be the meaning of *tatta-*, regardless of whether taken to correspond to Skt. *tattva* or *tantra*.

[19] *Gāthā* 2: *amiaṃ pāua-kavvaṃ' paḍhiuṃ souṃ ca je ṇa āṇaṃti/kāmassa tatta-tattiṃ' kuṇaṃti te kaha na lajjaṃti?//*

. [20] The Ābhīras (whom already Patañjali, *c.* 150 BC, mentions; see Nilakanta Sastri, 1966, p. 99) were for centuries the northern neighbours of the Śātavāhanas. To attribute the origin of the Kṛṣṇa-*gopī* myth to these Ābhīras (as Bhandarkar, 1913, p. 38 and Vaudeville, 1968, pp. 749f; 1975, pp. 104ff seem to do) could explain the occurence of the theme in the Deccan. But proof for this theory is wanting. That knowledge of Viṣṇu myths was popularised by some form of folk drama is suggested by 425 (authentic), which refers to *Vali-bandha*; this phrase is found in Patañjali as the title of a drama or something similar (*vārttika* 15, *ad* Pāṇini III, 1, 26).

[21] *Gāthā* 89: *muha-māruеṇa taṃ Kaṇ'ha! go-raaṃ Rāhiāi avaṇeṃto/eāṇa vallavīṇaṃ' aṇṇāṇa vi goraaṃ harasi//* (MS P gives Poṭa as the name of the poet). The commentary G explains *go-rajas* (for which MW has 'a particle of dust on a cow-hair, viz. a very small measure', 'atom') as 'a particle of dust that has gone into her eye'.

[22] *Gāthā* 112: *ajja vi vālo Dāmo'aro tti ia jampie Jasoāe/Kaṇha-muha-pesiaccha ṃ' ṇihuaṃ hasiaṃ Vaa-vahūhiṃ//* (MS P gives Nidhivigraha as the name of the poet.)

This means, they knew better than the innocent Yaśodā.

The shrewd milkmaid stood close to the other *gopīs*, pretending to praise [his] dance, and kissed Kṛṣṇa in the reflection on their cheeks.[23]

Implied is that the other *gopīs* were sweating with excitement, and that their sweating cheeks reflected Kṛṣṇa. Unless we assume an otherwise unknown dance episode, the exact occasion may be postulated to be the dance Kṛṣṇa performed on the heads of the serpent Kāliya.[24] The *gopīs* are standing round the pool, watching with a mixture of fright and excitement how Kṛṣṇa defeats the poisonous creature; the one *gopī* is 'shrewd', because she knows how to turn even this situation to her advantage.

Short as they are, these three stanzas contain already many facets of the Kṛṣṇa myth. The setting is clearly indicated by Vraja; Kṛṣṇa's (foster-)mother Yaśodā is mentioned, and this might connect the events described in the stanza with the cycle of myths known in earlier, viz. Jain and Buddhist, sources which know of the exchange of the children of Devakī and Yaśodā. Kṛṣṇa appears as a boy, on the verge of adolescence, with whom the girls and women of Vraja are in love; Rādhikā is mentioned as his favourite. On the other hand, if my interpretation of stanza 114 is correct, the dance with the *gopīs* mentioned in later sources is not referred to here (which does not exclude the possibility that a later reader might not have taken it to be an allusion to such a dance[25]). The theme of separation is also absent.[26]

From verses like 449 and 610 the 'turning of the eyes' appears as a sign of special affection. From the contrast between *kumārī* and *vadhū* in verse 457, and the many other contexts where *vadhū* occurs, we may assume that these women were married. The *ia* corresponds to Skt. *evam*.

[23] *Gāthā* 114: *ṇaccaṇa-salāhaṇa-ṇihe'ṇa pāsa-parisaṃṭhiā ṇiuṇa-govī/sari-goviāṇa cuṃvai' kavola-paḍimā-gaaṃ Kaṇhaṃ//* (MS P mentions Vura as the name of the poet.) The metre requires the short *sari-*, in place of the more common *sarisa-*. (Compare Pischel, § 245 and Turner, No. 13118, where *sari-*, corresponding to Skt. *sadṛś*, is mentioned for Pālī, Ārdhamāgadhī, and Apabhraṃśa.) The meaning 'fellow-' appears also in verse 54, with which we may compare *sadṛśa-strī* 'a wife of equal caste' (MW).

[24] *Bālacarita*, Act IV, verses 1-7 with intervening prose. After v. 6 all girls exclaim: 'A miracle! Stepping on the five hoods of Kāliya, he dances the *hallīsaka*!' Also in v. 6, Kṛṣṇa calls his jumping on the serpent's hoods 'hallīsaka'.

[25] Br/ViP Nos. 41f (see p. 94. below) is a passage almost certainly derived from Hāla v. 114; there the dance is indeed interpreted as the *rāsa*.

[26] *Gāthā* 128 reads: 'In the forest fanned by the spring breeze and filled with

2.212 *The religious significance*

The three stanzas are typical of the character of the anthology in that they deal with erotic situations; any further, directly religious, significance cannot be detected. We can, however, gain some interesting insights from a more detailed look at the anthology. First, there are three stanzas which mention Kṛṣṇa but are almost certainly spurious.[27] In two, Kṛṣṇa can be regarded as identified with Viṣṇu;[28] the three authentic stanzas betray no sign of such an identification. Secondly, there are six *gāthās* which mention Viṣṇu (or his manifestation as Vāmana).[29] Three are authentic, and refer to Viṣṇu in metaphors.[30] Two further verses which are possibly authentic, are functional, viz. benedictory, stanzas of Sanskrit inspiration.[31] Both refer to Viṣṇu's defeat of Vali. Finally, one spurious verse[32] is erotic in content, referring to Viṣṇu's love-making with Lakṣmī.

We may derive the following results from this situation: the religious significance of the Kṛṣṇa figure appears only in verses which are spurious, viz. belong to later stages in the MS tradition; authentic stanzas on Viṣṇu are non-erotic, referring to him only in comparisons or in a functional manner. Again only a spurious poem deals with Viṣṇu in an erotic context. All this can be combined in the hypothesis that originally Kṛṣṇa the lover was distinct from Viṣṇu and Kṛṣṇa the speaker of the *Gītā*. This is however an *argumentum ex silentio*.

During the following centuries, Hāla's anthology enjoyed enor-

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the humming of the bees, a *gopī* sings a song of separation, which perturbs the traveller's mind.' (conjectural translation). But there is no suggestion here that this 'milkmaid' is a mythical person.

[27] Vs. 447 and 657; 974 = *Kāvyaprakāśa*, see Weber, 1870, pp. 208f.

[28] In 657 he is called Madhumathana which certainly in 117 and 425 is a name of Viṣṇu. His conch Pāñcajanya is mentioned in 974.

[29] In decreasing order of authenticity: 388, 425 (in all MSS); 117, 411, 406 (missing in one or two MSS); 816 (only in one MS, T).

[30] The churning of the milk-ocean is mentioned in 388 and 117; 425 contains a pun on Vali.

[31] The pattern *Harī jaai* is found in 406; 411 has *Hariṇo taiaṃ paaṃ ṇamaha*. Other examples of the genre, mainly of the type with *nam*, are 1, 325, 151, 697; they function as opening or concluding prayers to a century of verses.

[32] 816.

mous popularity,[33] and we can be sure that a number of later authors knew these particular stanzas on Kṛṣṇa;[34] the manifest eroticism of these *gāthās* was likely to be reinforced by that of the whole anthology, thereby conditioning the understanding of later generations.

2.22 *Kālidāsa*

Ignoring here one (or possibly two) religious work(s) of the period between Hāla and Kālidāsa (discussed in 2.3), we can regard a few verses found in Kālidāsa's works as following next, after the *gāthās* in the *Sattasaī*, in the chronology of the secular tradition. Kālidāsa, it appears, lived at the court of the Gupta kings Candragupta II, Vikramâditya (AD 378-414) and Kumāragupta (AD 414-455)[35] in Ujjain. In two of his works he refers to Kṛṣṇa, although in the second the reference is veiled.

2.221 *The Meghadūta*

During the imaginary journey which the cloud has to make to deliver the love-message, it is touched by a rainbow; the contrast in colours is compared by the poet with Kṛṣṇa's appearance:

> . . . (the rainbow) by which your black body will obtain surpassing beauty, just as (the black body) of Viṣṇu in the dress of a cowherd[36] (obtained beauty) through the peacock feathers flashing brilliant.[37]

Unlike the situation in the older layers of the *Sattasaī*, Viṣṇu is clearly identified with Kṛṣṇa.[38] This is however not the earliest

[33] This is demonstrated by the productive *MSS* tradition and the many commentaries; by quotations in numerous works on poetics; by similar collections in Prakrit (the *Vajjâlaggam*), in Skt. (Govardhana's *Saptaśatī*, 12th century), in Hindī (Bihāri Lāl's *Satsai*, 16th century); and by the usage later Sanskrit poets made of the thematic material.

[34] See note 25 above.

[35] On the much-discussed date of Kālidāsa see Winternitz III, 1920, pp. 40-6; Keith, 1924, pp. 145-7; 1928, pp. x. 79-82. Indian authors tend to place him into the first century BC; see the majority of works referred to in the new CC IV, p. 61.

[36] The phrase *gopa-veṣasya Viṣṇoḥ* can also be translated as 'Viṣṇu in the guise, or appearance, of a cowherd/the Cowherd (viz. Kṛṣṇa)'.

[37] Stanza 15: . . . *yena śyāmaṃ vapur atitarāṃ kāntim āpatsyate te barheṇêva sphurita-rucinā gopa-veṣasya Viṣṇoḥ.*

[38] Only some spurious verses in Hāla (see note 27 above) showed their identification. The style of the present verse is similar to those *gāthās* (388, 117, 425) which mention Viṣṇu only in a poetic comparison.

source of such an identification;[39] the motif of the black body enhanced in its beauty by the peacock feathers is also attested in earlier sources.[40] The verse is nevertheless important, because it helps us to unveil the allusion in the following passage.

2.222 *The Raghuvaṃśa*

The four stanzas 48-51 in canto VI of the *Raghuvaṃśa* very likely show that Kālidāsa knew of Kṛṣṇa not only as manifestation of Viṣṇu, but also as the lover of the *gopīs*. At princess Indumatī's *svayaṃvara*, the king of the Śūrasenas, Suṣena, is introduced to her as one of the contestants:

> The Yamunā, although [still] at Mathurā, appears as if her water had [already] mixed with the waves of the Ganges [at Allahabad], because sandal paste has been washed off from the breasts of his (=Suṣena's) harem women at the time of the water games.
>
> He wears the jewel which, they say, Kāliya the Yamunā-dweller who was protected from Garuḍa handed over to him and which covers his whole chest with brilliance; he seems to put to shame Viṣṇu who wears the Kaustubha.
>
> Let the splendour of youth, O beautiful one! by choosing this young man for your husband, enter into Vṛndāvana which is by no means inferior to Caitraratha (=Kubera's park) with its beds of flowers on tender shoots.
>
> Sit on stones moistened by water-drops and fragrant with bitumen, and look at peacocks dancing during the rainy season in the lovely caves of Govardhana.[41]

Various names mentioned in those verses must have evoked the Kṛṣṇa story in the minds of Kālidāsa's audience: Yamunā, Kāliya, Vṛndāvana, and Govardhana. Thus Suṣena is introduced as the successor to Kṛṣṇa, the 'king' of Mathurā, who possesses, in a way even surpasses, the valour, splendour and beauty of the

[39] As Vaudeville, 1968, p. 756, seems to think; we find it already in the Hv and in 'Bhāsa'.

[40] See below, Hv 55, 9ff (and *Bālacarita* V, v. 3).

[41] *Yasyâvarodha-stana-candanānāṃ prakṣālanād vāri-vihāra-kāle/*
Kalinda-kanyā Mathurāṃ gatâpi Gaṅgôrmi-sampṛkta-jalêva bhāti//
trātena Tārkṣyāt kila Kāliyena maṇiṃ visṛṣṭaṃ Yamunâukasā yaḥ/
vakṣaḥ-sthala-vyāpi-ruciṃ dadhānaḥ sa-Kaustubhaṃ hrepayatîva Viṣṇum//
sambhāvya bhartāraṃ imaṃ yuvānaṃ mṛdu-pravālôttara-puṣpa-śayye/
Vṛndāvane Caitrarathād anūne nirviśyatāṃ sundari yauvana śrīḥ//
adhyāsya câmbhaḥ-pṛṣatôkṣitani śaileya-gandhīni śilā-talāni/
kalāpināṃ prāvṛṣi paśya nṛtyaṃ kāntāsu Govardhana-kandarāsu//

latter, and thus would be her ideal husband. This implies almost certainly that Vṛndāvana was known as the place of Kṛṣṇa's love-making with the *gopīs*; the erotic symbolism of the Yamunā (first verse) and Vṛndāvana (last verse) is quite pronounced. We may perhaps go even further. Just as the jewel Suṣena wears is superior to Viṣṇu's Kaustubha, the love-making Indumatī would enjoy with him in Vṛndāvana would be superior to that of Kṛṣṇa with the *gopīs*: while they suffered separation from him, she would enjoy his company even during the rainy season (the most common poetic symbol of 'love in separation' since Hāla). That such a knowledge of the separation motif is not impossible at this date becomes clear from the following fragment.

2.23 *Śyāmilaka*

This author was probably a younger contemporary of Kālidāsa[42] who, like the latter, wrote in Ujjain.[43] An allusion[44] in his *bhāṇa* (a one-act, one-actor play) called *Pādatāḍitaka* can possibly be interpreted as referring to Rādhikā's separation (*viraha*) from Kṛṣṇa; this would be, along with Kālidāsa's similarly veiled evidence, the earliest testimony for the motif. Such an interpretation is, however, far from simple.

In the passage 63, 3–66, 2, a Buddhist layman called *Nirapekṣa* ('Disregard') is made fun of. We encounter him in the quarter of the prostitutes, yet he is full of pious words. The *viṭa* (who reports to the audience what he encounters on his walk and what people say to him) tells us that a dear friend of his has become very unhappy because of Nirapekṣa's disregard for her; she has 'become emaciated with the "vow" of (living like) a nun in her brothel'.[45] Therefore

[42] Schokker (1966, p. 19) suggests AD 455-510; on pp. 18-25, slightly earlier dates are discussed. Keith (1924, p. 185, note 3) is clearly too pessimistic ('need not be older than AD 1000'). Schokker (1966, p. 25) suggests that he was a contemporary of Kālidāsa; but Kālidāsa mentions (*Mālavikâgnimitra*, I, prose after verse 1) among his predecessors also a poet 'Saumilla', and I wonder whether 'Śyāmilaka' could not be a hyper-Sanskritised form of Saumilla, parallel, for example, to Vyaṅkaṭa for Veṅkaṭa.

[43] The town is mentioned, as Sārvabhauma, in 21, 9; see Schokker, 1966, p. 21.

[44] I am grateful to Dr S. Janaki for having drawn my attention to this passage.

[45] 63, 6: *tāṃ . . . anapekṣayā veśā-tāpasī-vratena karśayati.* A very similar expression is found in the *Padmaprābhṛtakam* 31, 25; compare Loman, 1956, p. 67.

he persuades him, in a passage loaded with puns,[46] to return to that girl and end her suffering in separation from him. 'You ought to pull lady Rādhikā out of the ocean of her grief!'[47] He justifies this advice through two incongruous lines of argument which are combined in his constant puns: if you are a true follower of the Buddha, you must practise compassion, and, if you agree that you are still imperfect, you might as well return to Rādhikā.

The literal meaning of the passage allows us to infer no more than that 'Rādhikā' was the name of a prostitute; as 'Rādhā', this proper name is known also from other early sources.[48] But in view of the complexities of this play, and of the *kāvya* style in general (of which the passage from the *Raghuvaṃśa* is a good example), such a conclusion appears to be too narrow and restricted. The comic effect of the whole passage rests on the ubiquitous double meanings of phrases, puns, and choice of names.[49] Religious, Buddhist, material is employed to that effect.[50] The characterisation of women tends to be stereotyped, and Rādhikā is described here as the type 'virahiṇī'.[51] Taking these points together, and remembering that Rādhikā is already known to Hāla and the separation motif possibly to Kālidāsa, we can arrive at the (hypothetical) conclusion that Syāmilaka alludes, for comic

[46] Some of these are mentioned by Schokker in his *Notes* of 1966, but his translation (Schokker, 1976) leaves them out. For a complete translation, with all puns, of 63, 3-66, 2 see Hardy, 1976, pp. 69f.

[47] 65, 4: *arhati bhavāṃs tatrabhavatīṃ Rādhikāṃ . . . śoka-sāgarād uddhartum.*

[48] Karṇa's mother in the *Mahābhārata* is called by that name, and in the *Lalitavistara* (18, line 20, in Lefmann's edition, p. 265; etc.) a slave-girl.

[49] Note his own name, 'Nirapekṣa', which plays on the name of one of the Buddhist *brahma-vihāras*, viz. *upekṣa* 'indifference'. In the *Padmaprābhṛtaka* we hear of a prostitute Saṅgha-dāsikā which means 'servant girl to the Buddha's church', but also 'prostitute for a congregation'.

[50] For instance when he puns on the meanings of the four *brahmavihāras* in 64, 2: karuṇâ*tmakasya bhavato* maitrīm *ādāya vartamānasya tvayi* muditāyāṃ *yoṣiti yuktam* upekṣa-vihāritvam? The editors of the earlier edition (Moticandra/Agravala) misread *mudritāyām*, on the basis of which they constructed a *tantric* (implied) meaning of the passage, which is clearly untenable; see *ibid.* pp. 198, 273 (Hindī). They do however connect the name Rādhika with the *gopī* myth, in that they say: 'Rādhikā is that woman with whom the tantric ritual (sādhanā), consisting of sexual intercourse, used to be performed (by Nirapekṣa), *just as* Kṛṣṇa's amorous sports were with Rādhikā' (*jaise Kṛṣṇa kī Rādhikā ke sāth vihāra-līlā hotī thī*, p. 273).

[51] Verses 64 and 66 describe *virahiṇīs* in general; compare Loman (1956, pp. 14f) on the stereotyped characterization of women in the *Padmaprābhṛtaka*.

effect, to the mythical archetype of a *virahiṇī*, viz. the *gopī* Rādhikā. Anyway, later poets in the same tradition will develop this theme further (see 2.5 below).

2.24 *Summary*

The various source fragments which we have so far discussed allow us to say that Kṛṣṇa's love-making with the *gopīs*, and with Rādhikā in particular, and probably also their (temporary?) separation from him, were known between the third and fifth centuries in literary circles in Mahārāṣṭra and Ujjain. There is a remarkable cheerfulness and lightheartedness about the way in which the poets use the themes; we find no awe or metaphysical heaviness here. The same ease and playfulness, which must also have been typical of the original version of the stories (not extant) and which became crystallized in these partly quite famous and influential works, will be found also in many later sources, even when these have a pronouncedly religious character.

2.3 The epic traditions

After the two Gupta court poets, we have to return to the early centuries AD when documents become available which know of the *gopī* story in a somewhat different form and which approach it as a religious theme. These two points distinguish the present material from the 'secular poetic' tradition, while the purāṇic version (discussed in 2.4 below) differs once again in the treatment of the story, but also in the kind of religion it employs.

The best-known representative of the epic traditions is the *Mahābhārata*. Its older layers reach well back into the first millennium BC, but even the most fleeting reference to the *gopīs* is only made at a very much later stage in the development of the MBh tradition. The *Harivaṃśa*, on the other hand, originates in the first few centuries AD, and has become attached to the MBh as an 'appendix' (khila); it deals with the *gopī* episodes in quite an outspoken manner. The much-discussed and disputed dramas ascribed to Bhāsa are in some sense also connected with the epic traditions. In one of them, the *Bālacarita-nāṭaka*, Kṛṣṇa's youth among the cowherds in Vraja is treated in the form of a play. Since there is some evidence suggesting that this drama, in some form,

belongs to the early centuries AD, it has been included here; its treatment of Kṛṣṇa's dance makes it relevant for our discussion.

The type of religion which we find employed in the Hv and in 'Bhāsa' and which also interprets the *gopī* story, is quite idiosyncratic and does not conform to the 'normative ideology' (which we shall encounter in the purāṇic tradition). The Hv treatment is particularly interesting, because it anticipates certain features which we shall meet again, in a fully developed form, in emotional Kṛṣṇa bhakti. Also the religious interpretation of 'Bhāsa' is not without parallels in later works.

2.31 *The Mahābhārata*

The constituted text of the critical edition of the Great Epic does not refer to the *gopīs*. But even in passages which we now know to be later additions, Kṛṣṇa's adventures with the milkmaids are, on the whole, ignored. There is only one exception to this. *Sabhāparvan* (MBh II) 61, 40-42, relates how the Kauravas tried to humiliate Draupadī, whom Yudhiṣṭhira had gambled away in a game of dice:

> Then . . Duḥśāsana threw Draupadī into the middle of the assembly and started to pull off her clothes by force.
> But when Draupadī's clothes were pulled off, . . there appeared one garment after the other of the same kind. Then a great noisy uproar started.[52]

A few MSS elaborate this brief account of the miracle and make Kṛṣṇa responsible for it. They add:

> But when her clothes were pulled off, Draupadī thought of Hari: 'Govinda! who live in Dvārakā! Kṛṣṇa! Lover of the *gopīs*! . . .'[53]

Only three northern MSS[54] mention the epithet 'lover of the *gopīs*'

[52] MBh (critical edition) II, 61, 40-42a: *tato Duḥśāsano . . Draupadyā vasanaṃ balāt / sabhā-madhye samākṣipya vyapakraṣṭuṃ pracakrame // ākṛṣyamāṇe vasane Draupadyās tu . . / tad-rūpam aparaṃ vastraṃ prādur-āsīd anekaśaḥ // tato hala-halā-śabdas tatrâsid ghora-nisvanaḥ /*

[53] Passage *543 with MBh II, 61, 40: *ākṛṣyamāṇe vasane Draupadyā cintito Hariḥ/Govinda! Dvārakā-vāsin! Kṛṣṇa! gopī-jana-priya!/* . . . Passage *542 (ibid.), added on the margin by a different hand in Ms K_1, has only the last half-line.

[54] Passage *543 is found in the text of D_{n^1}, D_{n^2}, and D_4. D_1 has it on the margin, and D_5 on the margin by a different hand.

as a genuine part of their text, and thus there can be no doubt that it is a later addition.[55]

What is perhaps more surprising is the fact that even in such later additions when the context just invites a reference also to the *gopīs*, it is not made.[56]

We may conclude from these brief observations that the constituted text of the Epic did not know of the *gopīs* and that even during later periods they were on the whole ignored, either because the sentiment pervading this epic tradition objected to the episode, or (perhaps more likely) because it was felt that the *Harivaṃśa* contained all the necessary information.

2.32 *The Harivaṃśa*

Like the *Mahābhārata*, the *Harivaṃśa* also must be regarded as a tradition of poetic activities over many centuries. Fortunately there is now a critical edition available which reveals that the more than 18,000 *ślokas* of the various recensions current now can be reduced to a constituted text of just over 6,000 verses. Here we find the *gopī* story treated in a number of verses which then served as the source for many later works, and thus the passage deserves a detailed analysis.

2.321 *The text and its structure*

The opening passage of the *Harivaṃśa* shows us the intention of the work:

[55] Winternitz, 1916, suggested that this passage was a later interpolation, but extended this assumption to the whole miracle about which the constituted text preserves at least one verse. Compare Edgerton, 1944, pp. xxviiif, and Keith, 1924, p. 97.

[56] I have noticed two such passages: MBh II, 34-38, and Appendix I, No. 21, which the Southern recension adds after MBh II, 35, 29. The context here are the insults of Śiśupāla against Kṛṣṇa. The insults made in chapter 34 (and also in the interpolated passages Appendix I, Nos. 19 and 20) do not refer to Kṛṣṇa's youth. But in chapter 38, Śiśupāla makes it a point to ridicule the alleged miracles of the young Kṛṣṇa in Vraja. But the *gopīs* are not mentioned! Only Māgha (AD 650), who deals with this episode in his *mahākāvya* (canto xvi, corresponding to MBh II, 38) mentions 'the sin of enjoying the wives of the cowherds' (v. 8). Again, Appendix I, No. 21 (a very long passage of more than eight hundred *ślokas*) is Bhīṣma's justification for honouring Kṛṣṇa, and lines 705 to 1500 substantiate the justification by narrating Kṛṣṇa's youth in Vraja without, however, mentioning the *gopīs*.

(Śaunaka addressing the bard Sauti[57]) 'O Sauti! You have narrated the very long epic (*ākhyāna*) about the Bhāratas and also the kings; . . . you have told with smooth words the auspicious ancient story (*purāṇa*); a bliss for the ear and the mind and consisting of nectar, it delights me. In it you spoke about the rise of the Kurus, . . . but not about that of the Vṛṣṇis and Andhakas; please tell me this [too]!'[58]

This is the typical way of attaching new material to an older and prestigious tradition.[59] The interest had shifted from the main heroes of the epic, the Pāṇḍavas and Kauravas, to other figures whose full story had not been told in the Great Epic; they are called Vṛṣṇis and Andhakas here, but these names conceal a reference to Kṛṣṇa who was the most important representative of these people. It is implied that there existed a tradition about Kṛṣṇa, his background and his life before he entered into the events narrated in the MBh, and that representatives of that tradition were anxious to connect it with the MBh tradition. The following verses demonstrate this clearly. Sauti replies:

I shall narrate to you from the beginning the chronicle (*vaṃśa*) of the Vṛṣṇis. Janamejaya had asked the pupil of the wise Vyāsa about it [in former times]: when he had heard the story (*itihāsa*) of the Bhāratas in full, he told Vaiśampāyana: 'I have listened to your narration of the epic (*ākhyāna*) *Mahābhārata*. . . In it many heroes, great warriors of the Vṛṣṇi and Andhaka clan, have been praised by name and by their deeds. . . [But] I am not yet satisfied with the recitation of that ancient tale (*purātana*), [because] the Vṛṣṇis and Pāṇḍavas [still form] in my mind one [undifferentiated] group. But you, a chronicler (*vaṃśa-kuśala*) who have seen them with your own eyes, [can] tell me in detail about their lineage; I want to know them all. . . !'[60]

[57] Viz. Ugraśravas, the son of Lomharṣaṇa (thus also called Lomaharṣaṇi).

[58] Hv 1, 1.4f: *Saute! sumahad-ākhyānaṃ bhavatā parikīrtitam /*
Bhāratānāṃ ca sarveṣāṃ pārthivānāṃ tathâiva ca //
kathitaṃ bhavatā puṇyaṃ purāṇaṃ ślakṣṇayā girā/
manaḥ-karṇa-sukhaṃ tan māṃ prīṇāty amṛta-saṃmitam//
tatra janma Kurūṇāṃ vai tvayôktam, Lomaharṣaṇe /
na tu Vṛṣṇy-Andhakānāṃ vai; tad bhavān prabravītu me//

[59] See Hacker, 1959, p. 39: *'Solche . . Fragen . . . deuten immer darauf hin, daß man merkte, wie verschiedene Mythologeme, die sich, für uns historisch unterscheidbar, an denselben Namen angeschlossen hatten, schlecht zusammen paßten, und daß man das Bedürfnis der Zusammenfassung ebenso wie die Harmonisierung der divergenten Traditionsinhalte empfand.'* Compare ibid., p. 199.

[60] Hv 1, 6-13a: *Janamejayena yat pṛṣṭaḥ śiṣyo Vyāsasya dhīmataḥ /*

On the one hand, the precise sequence of narrators also of the MBh has been preserved here;[61] but on the other hand a clear contrast is established. The Pāṇḍavas are the heroes of a literary form called variously *ākhyāna*, *purāṇa*, *purātana*, and *itihāsa*, while a *vaṃśa*, the speciality of *vaṃśa-kuśalas* (chroniclers), is now advertised as filling the gaps left in the MBh by narrating the life of the Vṛṣṇis (and, by implication, the youth of Kṛṣṇa).

Whether we regard the term 'vaṃśa' as different from, or as synonymous with, the technical 'purāṇa-pañcalakṣaṇa',[62] it is sufficient for our purposes here to note that the story of Kṛṣṇa constitutes the bulk of the text reconstructed in the critical edition, viz. 53 chapters out of a total of 118 (or 79 about the Yādavas in general). To eliminate further material in the constituted text would mean to reveal the Kṛṣṇa story as even more central to the *vaṃśa* Śaunaka is eager to hear;[63] but it will be less hypothetical

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tat te 'haṃ saṃpravakṣyāmi Vṛṣṇīnāṃ vaṃśam āditaḥ //
śrutvêtihāsaṃ kārtsnyena Bhāratānāṃ sa Bhārataḥ /
Janamejayo mahā-prajño Vaiśampāyanam abravīt: //
Mahābhāratam ākhyānaṃ . . . / kathitaṃ bhavatā . . . mayā śrutam //
tatra śūrāḥ samākhyātā bahavaḥ puruṣarṣabhāḥ /
nāmabhiḥ karmabhiś câiva Vṛṣṇy-Andhaka-mahārathāḥ //9//
na ca me tṛptir astîha kīrtyamāne purātane /
ekaś ca me mato rāśir Vṛṣṇayaḥ Pāṇḍavās tathā //11//
bhavāṃś ca vaṃśa-kuśalas teṣāṃ pratyakṣa-darśivān /
kathayasva kulaṃ teṣāṃ vistareṇa . . . // tāṃs tān icchāmi veditum / . . .

[61] See MBh I, 1 (anukramaṇikā-parvan): Vyāsa composed it and taught it to Vaiśampāyana, who recited it to Janamejaya; Sauti learned it from the latter and related it to Śaunaka.

[62] Utilising the information provided by Vaidya, 1969, pp. xxxiiif, xxxvii, xxxix, 785, the constituted text does indeed show the five characteristics *sarga*, *pratisarga*, *manvantara*, *vaṃśa*, and *vaṃśânucarita* (see Kirfel, 1927). Thus Vaidya (ibid., p. xxix) assumes that 'vaṃśa' (in Hv 1, 6.12) is synonymous with 'purāṇa' (in Kirfel's sense). On the other hand, he himself (ibid., p. 785) assumes that a version of the Hv which was prior to the constituted text did not contain all five characteristics. Compare note 63 below.

[63] The *Agnipurāṇa* (chapter 12, according to Vaidya, 1969, p. 785) when summarising the content of the Hv, leaves out Hv 1, 23 to 19, 35, and Vaidya considers also chapters 99 to 118 of the Hv to be later (ibid., pp. xxxvii, xxxix). This would leave only the history of the Yādavas in the text (=Hv. 20 to 98, with 46 to 98 on Kṛṣṇa). Ingalls (1968), shortly before the publication of Vaidya's critical edition, eliminated the first 3,000 *ślokas* from the Vulgate of the Hv (calling them 'purāṇic'), and lets the authentic text, which he calls 'Kṛṣṇa-Epos', begin with chapter Hv 46.

to fix with Vaidya,[64] Hacker,[65] and Ingalls[66] the fourth century AD as the *terminus ad quem* for the Kṛṣṇa story. All this means that by the fourth century AD the major tradition about Kṛṣṇa, viz. the *Mahābhārata* (which after all contains the *Bhagavadgītā*) had been complemented by material about Kṛṣṇa from another tradition. It also means that thereby a religious interpretation of the new Kṛṣṇa material in terms of the theology of the *Mahābhārata* was made possible, which in fact happened during the following centuries. But we must not anticipate, and have to turn now to the *gopī* episode as it appears in the Hv.

2.322 *The gopī episode*

Ingalls has characterized the Kṛṣṇa story as found in the Hv as 'always closer to true folk-lore, . . . less pious, less brahmanical orthodox'[67] than later purāṇic versions. We move here in 'a world of nomadic cattle herders'[68] who hate town-life and everything it stands for, like taxes or an oppressive king.[69] Even their heaven is typical of this world, it is Goloka, the World of Cows.[70] Naturally

[64] 1969, pp. xv, xxxix. He assumes that the constituted text has 'an antiquity ranging from the fourth century to the eleventh century' (p. xv), using Kṣemendra's *Bhārata-mañjarī* (of *c.* AD 1045) as the *terminus ad quem.* But as Edholm/Suneson (1972, p. 33 with note 10) have rightly pointed out, Vaidya's further assumption that most of the interpolations, including those found only in the Southern Recension, must be later than AD 1050 does not hold, since there is no reason to believe that Kṣemendra knew this Southern recension. From p. xxxix follows that he assumes *c.* AD 300 as the date for the central portion, the Kṛṣṇa story.

[65] He discusses Hv 31 (Prahlāda) 1959, p. 47, and suggests *c.* AD 350; chapters I, 50 to 55 (of the Vulgate) are discussed 1960, pp. 57, 61 (on the *avatāra* notion), where the fifth or sixth century AD is mentioned as the date for the redaction of (some form of) the Vulgate.

[66] 1968, p. 394. But compare note 63 above. His argument is concerned with showing that what he calls the Kṛṣṇa-Epos qualifies as a *mahākāvya*, since it possesses all the stereotyped topics and the poetic embellishments that are required by that genre of literature. (An amorous scene, II, 88f, which he mentions as one of the typical topics, has however been taken out of Vaidya's critical text and is found there only in the Appendix I, as No. 29D.) He postulates a date somewhat earlier than Kālidāsa, because of the relative simplicity of this *mahākāvya*, and suggests the first three centuries AD. See ibid., pp. 390-4 for the whole argument.

[67] Ibid., p. 384.

[68] Ibid., p. 385. In p. 394 he speaks of the 'tribal areas of the west', which seems to mean the Panjab or northern Rajasthan. Ingalls does not, however, provide any evidence for this theory about the provenance of the Hv.

[69] Ibid., p. 386.

[70] Ibid., p. 387.

also the moral code of such people is different from that of the *śāstras*; it is a life-style and a system of ethics for which we can find parallels even today in certain tribal communities in India.[71] To be more precise: a society in which the essence of the *gopī* story would not be incongruous.

The Hv tells us about the *gopīs* in no more than 21 verses (viz. chapter 63, 15-35), in a passage that seems to lack an overall 'plot'.[72] In the preceding chapters, it has been related how Kṛṣṇa enraged Indra by preventing the cowherds from celebrating the customary Indra festival; how Indra sent the clouds with heavy rains to punish them; how Kṛṣṇa held the mountain Govardhana up like an umbrella; and how Indra was made to honour Kṛṣṇa. The present chapter begins with the herdsmen, confused and puzzled by those miraculous events, asking him:

'As who among the Rudras, Maruts, or Vasus have you, of great strength! been born, and for what purpose? [That on the one hand] Vasudeva is your father, [that you played] children's games in the forest, [took to] a lowly birth among us, and [on the other hand] your god-like deeds — [these things throw] our minds into confusion, O Kṛṣṇa!'[73]

But Kṛṣṇa is not yet prepared to solve this dilemma for them; he tells them to 'wait for the proper time', when 'you will hear,

[71] Above all, the *gopī* stories raise the problem of freedom in sexual matters. But when one reads through a book like Archer, 1974, it is almost like being transported back in time to Vraja. Free pre-marital sex among the village girls and boys is taken for granted by the Santals, as long as it happens in the forest. Playing the flute while grazing the cows the boys know how to attract the girls, and their dances are full of amorous overtones. Even when married, the women have the occasional chance to meet their former lovers. See in particular pp. 78f, 118f, 126, 24, 65-8, 197. Even freer *mores* in sexual matters are found with another tribe, the Todas of South India, who specialise in buffalo-rearing; see Emeneau, 1971. The Santals and Todas are mentioned here not because they are descendants to the ancient *gopas* in any historical sense, but because their societies allow for the kind of psychology which we also find in the stories about the *gopīs*,

[72] In the Poona and Bombay editions of the *Vulgate* II, 20, 15-35; in the Calcutta edition 77, 4078-98. Although it is often said that the passage depicts the *hallīsaka* dance, the critically edited text does not say so. It is only the commentary by Nīlakaṇṭha Caturdhara (*c.* AD 1650-90) and a few MSS in their colophone, that attribute a dance-character to the episode described here. Other MSS have the following titles: *rati-krīḍā*, *harṣa-*, *hela-*, *hallī-saṅkrīḍana*, *gopī-krīḍana*.

[73] Hv 63, 5f: *kas tvaṃ bhavasi Rudrāṇāṃ Marutāṃ vā, mahā-bala /*
Vasūnāṃ vā kim arthaṃ ca; Vasudevaḥ pitā tava //
vane ca bāla-krīḍā te janma câsmāsu garhitam /
Kṛṣṇa, divyā ca te ceṣṭā śaṅkitāni manāṃsi naḥ //

and see me in my true nature'.[74] This does, however, imply that they are basically right in suspecting that behind his ordinary nature another, not-human, is hidden; it implies also that what now follows is human behaviour but concealing a divine mystery.

When Kṛṣṇa then saw the fresh youth of the moon in the night, he turned his mind towards the pleasures of the autumn nights. (15)

He, filled with prowess, brought together bulls who had become furious, to fight on Vraja's roads which cow-dung [covered] like an unguent. (16)

Filled with prowess, he caused the cowherds, haughty in their strength, to fight; he the hero caught the cows in the forest, mighty like a sea-animal. (17)

Choosing the right occasion,[75] he drove the young cowgirls together in the night, and mãking them consent[76] he had his fun with them. (18)

Those lovely cowherd women drank with their glances his charming face in the night, as if it were the moon that had come down to earth. (19)

Kṛṣṇa was most attractive, dressed [as he was] in an auspicious garment that was dyed yellow like (or: with) orpiment and ginger, and silken and shining. (20)

Govinda, who had put on his armlets and chaplet, was looking handsome with the colourful garland of forest flowers, and beautified that Vraja. (21)

Then the milkmaids, seeing the various deeds which he, the splendid one, had achieved in the herdsmen's station, said: 'Honour to Dāmôdara!' (22)

And these beautiful women pressed him against their taut breasts, and looked at him with faces in which the eyes were set in motion. (23)

These cowherd women, eager for amorous pleasures, searched for Kṛṣṇa in the night, although their fathers, brothers, and mothers [tried to] hold them back. (24)

All the milkmaids, forming a group (or: row), had their fun in delightful ways;[77] in pairs they sang about Kṛṣṇa's deeds. (25)[78]

[74] Hv 63, 12: . . . *kālaḥ sampratipālyatām | tato bhavantaḥ śroṣyanti māṃ ca drakṣyanti tattvataḥ* // We may compare vv. 6 and 12 with BhG IV, 9: *janma karma ca me divyam evaṃ yo vetti tattvataḥ* 'who knows my godly birth and mode of operation thus as they really are' (Zaehner).

[75] *Kāla-vit*, literally 'knowing the right time'; compare *kālavidyā* 'knowledge of the calendar'. The precise meaning of the phrase however evades me.

[76] *Mānayānaḥ* (causative of *man*) + *kaiśorakam* 'young girls'. An alternative would be 'appreciating youth'.

[77] *Ramayanti manoharam*; alternative translations are 'they made the Delightful one stay, pleased him, caressed him', etc.

[78] We have here (and also in v. 27) the phrase *Kṛṣṇa-carita*. It is difficult to say whether this is meant here in a more technical sense, viz. that the author of the present

These beautiful young women, their eyes turned towards Kṛṣṇa, imitated Kṛṣṇa's sports and walked with Kṛṣṇa's gait. (26)

And other Vraja-women in the woods were striking with their fingers a rhythm (or: cymbals) and acted Kṛṣṇa's deeds. (27)

These Vraja-women had their fun imitating with pleasure his lustful looks and smiles, his dance and songs. (28)

These women sang with a sweetness produced by emotions. With Dāmôdara as object of their affection, they became happy in Vraja. (29)

With their bodies smeared with cowdung and mud, they ran after Kṛṣṇa in great delight, as female elephants after the male, and had their fun. (30)

Other women, with laughing faces and eyes like those of a black deer, drank Kṛṣṇa with eyes wide open with emotion, without getting their fill. (31)

Other cowherd girls, eager for sexual pleasures, became thirsty when observing his face, and then drank it when during the night they had occasion to make love. (32)

The women, thrilled with delight, perceived the sounds uttered, when he was saying 'ha! ha!' — spoken by Dāmôdara in a soothing manner. (33)

The hair — done with a parting[79] — of these cowherd women became dishevelled on account of their eagerness to make love, and spread delightfully over their breasts. (34)

Thus Kṛṣṇa, adorned by the garland of *gopīs*, sported merrily in the moonlit autumn nights. (35)[80]

The following verse (64, v. 1) mentions that 'once early in the morning' the cowherds came to Janārdana 'who had pleasure (*rati*) as the object of his liking' and told him about the devastation caused by the demon-bull Ariṣṭa; this is the end of Kṛṣṇa's amorous adventures in the *Harivaṃśa*.

2.323 *Interpretation*

These twenty-one verses make a strange and puzzling passage; the closer one looks at them, the more mysterious they become. There is no recognizable story, no logical development, no co-

passage knows of some literary work by that name (compare *Bāla-*, *Buddha-*, *Harṣa-carita* etc.), consisting of songs and dances and acting. On the other hand, it would require a real *tour de force* to interpret verses 25 to 28 as a description of a dance by Kṛṣṇa and the *gopīs*. Only a few MSS speak of the *hallīsaka* here (see note 72 above), but this can easily be explained as the influence of the *Bālacarita* (see 2.33 below).

[79] Apparently the sign that the woman is pregnant; see MW *sub sīmantaka*, *sīmanta-karaṇa*, and *sīmantônnayana*.

[80] For the Sanskrit text of this passage and linguistic notes see Appendix I.

herence in the narrative, and all this distinguishes the passage from other chapters in the Hv. The problem is not solved by altering the sequence of the verses, because almost every *śloka* appears to be a self-contained entity. One could speculate that epic recitation consisted of a given set of skeleton *ślokas* and free improvisation which provided a lively and coherent narrative around these *ślokas*; that other chapters in the Hv represent a polished literary version of both these elements; and that for some unknown reason only the skeleton stanzas were used for the *gopī* episode. Hv 64, v. 1 appears to imply, however, that some description of Kṛṣṇa's *rati* must have preceded it; thus it would be difficult to infer that the *gopī* story was originally alien to the Hv.

The purāṇic version which will be discussed in the following chapter (2.4) has utilized the verses of the Hv passage to construct a coherent narative; it would be rather futile to think of alternatives here, and instead various prominent themes will be investigated.

Verses 18 and 35 provide a kind of frame for the passage: Kṛṣṇa enjoys himself (√*mud*) with the girls during the autumn nights. This fun contrasts with the more serious tasks of lifting a mountain and fighting a wild bull, and yet it is no more than another aspect of his *līlā*. Just as he is the hero of supernatural strength, as a young man he is of superhuman beauty.[81] Thus it follows necessarily that the women fall in love with him. In keeping with a general 'realistic' spirit pervading the Hv,[82] there is no reluctance

[81] His beauty is very briefly mentioned here in vv. 20f, but other chapters, e.g. Hv 55; 52, 2-7 and *650 (of five *ślokas*) in the Southern recension, describe it much more extensively. There we hear of his garland made of forest flowers, his peacock-feathers, his flute, and singing in the forest, but without direct reference to the *gopīs*. The present passage does however contain a number of words which in Sanskrit poetry denote beauty; see Ingalls, 1962.

[82] Other passages appear to confirm the 'down-to-earth' spirit of the Hv. The critical edition allows us to arrive at a version of the Rukmiṇī story which has nothing romantic about it, unlike the interpolated passages, and the later purāṇic versions. See Vaidya, 1969, pp. xlif. The same applies to the Prahlāda story. Hv 31 is the oldest version, and Prahlāda is still very much the *dānava*. Appendix I, No. 42A and B show him as the wise and pious devotee of Viṣṇu. See Hacker 1959, pp. 27, 32, 35, 39-47. I cannot however agree fully with Ingalls for whom realistic style means: 'In place of the mystical, ecstatic *gopīs* that have filled Sanskrit literature since the ninth century we have earthy herder girls. They follow Kṛṣṇa about, "their bodies covered with dung and dust" from rolling on the ground with him [this last explanation is not found in the text].' (1968, p. 385) As I shall try to show

to depict the nocturnal scenes in frank erotic and sexual terms. Words derived from √*ram* occur many times[83] and indicate the key-theme in the story; to make matters 'worse' (in the eyes of the orthodox),[84] the women may well include married ones.[85] On this level the passage agrees closely with the spirit expressed in Hāla's few stanzas, although here neither Rādhikā nor the *gopīs*' jealousy is mentioned.

A thematic unity can be postulated for vv. (24), 25-28, (29). The four central *ślokas* deal with various forms of imitating and representing Kṛṣṇa's deeds, behaviour, mannerisms, etc. While v. 24 might suggest that this takes place *in the absence of* Kṛṣṇa,[86] v. 29 could be the concluding verse which states that by imitating and singing about Kṛṣṇa even the women separated[87] from him become happy.

In view of the likely date of the passage (viz. before the fourth century AD), the frequent metaphor of 'thirsting for and drinking Kṛṣṇa's beauty'[88] must have had a particular significance at the time. We recall that in the Buddhist formulation of the normative

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below, there appears to be a religious interpretation implied even in the Hv version of the *gopī* story; 'realism' must be used in the sense of 'accepting the senses and the body in a religious significance'.

[83] Vv. 15, 24, 25, 30, 32 (twice), 34; 64, 1. More emotional-erotic overtones are expressed through *mud* in vv. 18, 28, 30, 35.

[84] The commentator Nīlakaṇṭha (17th century) tries to justify at least Kṛṣṇa. He explains the phrase *kaiśorakaṃ mānayānaḥ* (in v. 18) by paraphrasing it as: 'honouring the saying that the pursuit, etc., of *kāma* is allowed before the sacred thread ceremony' — *prāg upanayanāt kāma-cārâdy-anujñâstîti vākyaṃ mānayan.* I am unable to trace this strange saying, but *Kāmasūtra* 1, 2, 3 appears to refer to a vaguely similar idea: 'one should practise *kāma* in one's youth' — *kāmaṃ ca yauvane* (*seveta*, from *sūtra* 1). But as mentioned in note 71 above, a tribal environment with freer sexual customs is much more likely the correct context of interpretation, and not such a legalistic śāstric argument.

[85] The words used here, *aṅganā*, etc., are not clear on this; but compare v. 34 which through *sīmanta* could suggest that some women were pregnant (and naturally, married).

[86] See my notes on v. 29 in Appendix I; particularly if we read *Vraja-gatāḥ*, it could mean that Kṛṣṇa is away in the forest (compare BhP X, 35, 1). In this case, it is preferable to take *praṇihitêkṣaṇāḥ* (in 26) in the sense of 'their eyes looking out for him (in waiting, or in search)'.

[87] If my interpretation is correct, this separation would still be only temporary, not final.

[88] See vv. 19, 23, (26), 30, 31.

ideology (see 1.41 above) *tṛṣṇā*, 'thirst', is said to be the cause of all *duḥkha*. 'Thirst' is metaphorical for the cravings, desires, and passions resulting from the impressions of the senses, for the emotional and physical reactions to what the senses take in. The present passage appears to allude to this conception, only that the interpretation it offers judges it in a positive manner. We find *tṛṣitā* 'thirsty' in v. 32, and we hear of 'eagerness' (24), 'longing' (32), and 'anxious desire' (34) to make love. That these cravings are connected with the impressions conveyed by the senses, particularly the eyes, is forcefully indicated by the frequent metaphor of 'drinking' Kṛṣṇa's beauty. But all this does not give rise to *duḥkha*; quite to the contrary, the women find *sukha* 'bliss' (29) and Kṛṣṇa is in fact characterized as 'the lord of bliss', as the *sukhī*.[89] We can develop this further through the simile 'as if it were the moon' (19), since the moon is commonly associated with *soma* and *amṛta*, with nectar and immortality.

Thus we may describe the intention of the present passage in the following manner. Just as the cowherds are wonder-struck by the extraordinary strength Kṛṣṇa displays, the *gopīs* are infatuated by his overwhelming beauty. They become thirsty for it, are eager to drink it, and find physical fulfilment in making love to him. When this is not possible, they resort to representational forms of that beauty, viz. to songs about him and to imitating him. Whether directly or indirectly engrossed in his beauty, they derive bliss from their craving. Just as Kṛṣṇa reveals in his heroism something of his otherwise hidden divine power, the *gopīs* become the recipients, via their senses, of the divine bliss which he possesses, or in fact, is. On the one hand, the passage is certainly 'realistic' in that the validity of a directly physical contact between the *gopīs* and Kṛṣṇa is maintained, in contradistinction to the normative ideology. But on the other hand, it is not 'realistic' in the sense of Ingalls' description.[90] Language and symbolism appear to imply an antinormative interpretation of the *gopī* episode; as we shall see below, emotional Kṛṣṇa bhakti will use a very similar conception. As 'appendix' to the MBh, the Hv does not give rise to

[89] Obviously it is possible to tune the meaning of *sukhī* down as 'who is happy'; but parallel to *deha/dehin*, 'controller of bliss' is quite possible.

[90] See the latter part of note 82 above. Ingalls is certainly right in stating that the *gopīs* here are not 'ecstatic'; this will become possible only when final separation has been explored for bhakti purposes.

any difficulties concerning the basic nature of Kṛṣṇa as the divine being who has taken on human form, but who suggests his real nature through superhuman exploits. But the symbolic theology suggested by the *gopī* story bears little resemblance to the teaching of the *Gītā* and other parts of the MBh, and once detected, is likely to give rise to a reaction from more orthodox quarters; as we shall see below (in 2.4), a reinterpretation along the lines of the *Gītā* has in fact been undertaken in the purāṇic tradition.

2.324 *Later interpolations*

The critical edition of the Hv allows us to identify various later interpolations and also some very interesting variant readings. These demonstrate a definite increase of the erotic aspects, and this exclusively in the *Southern* Recension of the Hv. The following four are the most conspicuous cases.

In v. 17 we find the variant[91] *gopīś ca* (for *gās caiva*): 'he the hero caught the *milkmaids* in the forest'.

In v. 24, some MSS[92] substitute 'husband' for either 'father' or 'brother', making it thereby clear that here at least some of the *gopīs* were understood to be married. The *purāṇas* follow this reading.

In connection with vv. 33f, the whole Southern Recension has a passage of ten *ślokas*[93] in which Kṛṣṇa's meeting with the *gopīs* is described like an orgy.

Again the whole of the Southern Recension[94] has a passage in which a typical Tamil myth about Kṛṣṇa is told, viz. his defeating seven bulls and gaining Nīlā[95] as bride.

[91] Only three Kerala MSS.

[92] One Northern MS in Śārada script ($Ś_1$), and six Southern MSS ($T_{1,3,4}$; $G_{3,5}$; M_4) substitute *pati* (in one case, *bhartṛ*).

[93] Passage *736, which M_{1-3} substitute for verses 33f, and D_6; T; G; M_4; G_{ed} add after verse 34. We hear here that Kṛṣṇa 'scratched a girl with his sharpened nails, pulled another by her hair' (lines 10f) etc. — quite in the style of the *Kāma-sūtra*.

[94] Also the southern-influenced MSS $D_{3,6}$. The passage is Appendix I, No. 12 (discussed by Govindâcārya, 1911b and Edholm/Suneson, 1972, p. 33). See below pp. 192.221f. on this myth.

[95] This is the Sanskrit name of Tamil Pinnai; since this figure was completely unknown in the North, the scribes, or editors, of the Poona edition of the *Padma-Purāṇa* altered in VI, 254, 73 and 265, 39 her name into *līlā* (which Gonda, 1969, p. 231, note 28, accepts by speaking of 'Līlā' as a consort of Viṣṇu)! In the Hv passage she is the daughter of Kumbhaka, Nanda's brother-in-law.

These variants and interpolations show that the Hv enjoyed popularity in the South, and that Southern sentiments did not object to the eroticism of the *gopī* passage.[96] This is interesting also in comparison with the MBh tradition (where, as we have seen, even later strata avoided any direct reference to the *gopīs*), and with the *Bālacarita* which will be discussed now.

2.33 *The plays attributed to Bhāsa*

Ever since Gaṇapati Śāstrī discovered MSS of thirteen plays in 1912 and claimed that these were the (otherwise lost) works of the poet Bhāsa whom Kālidāsa[97] has praised as one of his predecessors, the 'Bhāsa problem' has been debated quite extensively.[98] The present scope does not allow us to enter once again into this discussion, and we must restrict ourselves to the few points which are relevant in the context of Kṛṣṇa bhakti.[99] These plays show nevertheless a number of archaic features[100] which at least *in toto*

[96] Unfortunately we have no means of determining the dates of these variants and interpolations.

[97] *Mālavikâgnimitra* Act I, prose after verse 1.

[98] The following authors are positive about Bhāsa's authorship: Gaṇapati Śāstrī, 1912; Lindenau, 1918; Winternitz, 1920b, p. 187; 1920a, pp. 125-37; Weller, 1922 (trans. pp. 5-19); Keith, 1924, pp. 93ff; Woolner, 1930, vol. I, pp. v-viii (there also a concise summary of earlier literature); Pusalkar, 1941; Gonda, 1943; Thieme, 1966, pp. 72f. Devadhar, 1962, pp. ixf, has remained more sceptical.

[99] The following pages are only a summary of a more detailed treatment in Hardy, 1976, pp. 77-92, 638-43.

[100] Four may be mentioned here.

(1) Printz (1919, p. 6) has pointed out the occurrence of a special Prakrit dialect in two passages (*Bālacarita*, first half of Act III, and *Pañcarātra*, *praveśaka* of Act II; both passages will be discussed below) which was analysed by Weller (1922 intro. text pp. iiif) who called it 'Hirtendialekt' (herdsmen's dialect) and regarded it as a variety of Śaurasenī. In it we find *-o* for the nom. sg. masc., and *s* and *r* replaced by *ṣ* and *l*. Whether this dialect has anything to do with Bharata's Ābhīrī, supposedly spoken by cattle-herders (*Nāṭyaśāstra* XVIII, 48, 54; English trs. Ghosh, pp. 329f), cannot be decided. Thieme (1966, pp. 46, 73) follows Printz and Weller.

(2) Ārdhamāgadhī appears in the drama only in Aśvaghoṣa's fragment of a *prakaraṇa* and in 'Bhāsa's' *Karṇabhāra* (after verse 15); compare *Nāṭyaśāstra* XVIII, 47, 49. On the other hand, *Māhārāṣṭrī* as a dramatic dialect is relatively recent. None of 'Bhāsa's' plays employ it, but Kālidāsa has it in nine stanzas, and also Śūdraka in his *Mṛcchakaṭika*.

(3) The play *Daridra-Cārudatta* which has been ascribed to Bhāsa was revised and completed by Śūdraka in his *Mṛcchakaṭika*. Taking points (2) and (3) together,

suggest an early date; this appears to be corroborated also by the South Indian evidence[101]. Thus we may accept the hypothesis that, except for later additions and interpolations[102], these plays belong to the second to fourth century AD, a period which must also be assumed for Bhāsa.[103] In other words, we seem to be dealing here with material that is roughly contemporary with the Hv and Hāla's authentic stanzas. But nothing can be said about the provenance of these plays.[104] On the other hand, the milieu

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we obtain the following sequence: Aśvaghoṣa (first century AD) — Bhāsa (second–fourth century — Śūdraka/Kālidāsa (fifth century). See Woolner, 1928, p. 74 and Thieme, 1966, pp. 69-82.

(4) While Bhāsa and Kālidāsa agree on the whole in the relative frequency of metres employed in their plays, the *āryā* metre differs in a conspicuous manner. This metre is of a distinctly lyrical, Prakritic, origin (see Ingalls, 1965, p. 35 note 31), as is borne out by the *Sattasaī* which uses it exclusively, and thus was alien to the epic tradition which forms Bhāsa's background (see note 105 below). In Bhāsa we find only 11 *āryā* verses (twelfth rank), seven of which are in Prakrit and of a pronounced rustic flavour; but in Kālidāsa we find 105 verses (first rank), but only nine in (Māhārāṣṭrī) Prakrit. Together with point (2) this would indicate that Kālidāsa is experimenting with lyrical poetic material in his dramas by transforming its original rustic character into more sophisticated 'Sanskrit' forms of expression. Obviously, these considerations do not touch on the questions of whether all plays attributed to Bhāsa are by the same author, or whether Bhāsa was in fact the author. But for our purposes it is sufficient, if the antiquity of the plays can be shown in general.

[101] The most important testimony is found in the *Cilappatikāram* (on which see pp. 198f. below). There we find a dance by cowherd women in imitation of Kṛṣṇa's dance with the *gopīs*, said to be from the *Vālacaritaināṭakaṅkaḷ*, which also incorporates the theme of the bad omen found in the dance as described in Bhāsa's *Pañcarātra* (see 2.333 below). Āṇṭāḷ seems to employ ideas and phrases from the Bc (see p. 429 below), and TCVir 44 resembles Bc I, 1 very closely (see Gros, 1968, pp. 182f.) All this would suggest that at least the *Bālacarita* (and *Pañcarātra*) were known in South India from at least the seventh century AD onward, if not a century or two earlier.

[102] In Bc Act I, vv. 21-28, we hear that the various weapons of Viṣṇu and his vehicle Garuḍa incarnate themselves in Vraja, in order to be with him in the appearance of cowherds. A similar idea, viz. the weapons incarnated as saints, is attested in Śrīvaiṣṇava writing only from the eleventh century onwards (see Hardy, 1978, 3.21 with note 99).

[103] See Winternitz, 1920b, p. 187; Keith, 1924, p. 95; Woolner, 1930, p. vi; Thieme, 1966, p. 72. But since the problem of authorship and of the date of the plays are not inter-connected, I have tended to use 'Bhāsa' in order not to prejudice the issue.

[104] I know only of Weller (1922 German intro., pp. 10f) who suggested Mathurā as the place of composition of the Bc, because only there a vague title 'Bāla-' could

with which they can be associated is fairly clear: a number of indications point to the epic poetic tradition[105] as the background from which the plays evolved, and to a provincial royal court[106] as their social setting. This milieu betrays little brahmin influence,[107] although the religious motivation of the plays is quite pronounced.

2.331 The *Bālacarita-nāṭakam*

A somewhat mysterious passage, Act III, 1-3, in this drama is relevant to our study. The Bc is a devotional play which deals with Kṛṣṇa's heroic and miraculous deeds in Vraja (thus exemplifying the *vīra-* and *adbhuta-rasas* of classical dramatic theory), up to his victory over Kaṃsa in Mathurā. Thus in its subject matter (as also in its primary religious understanding of Kṛṣṇa) it has a parallel in the Hv, although it is difficult to identify the latter work as the source of the drama, since both may have derived their information about Kṛṣṇa's youth from a third, now lost, source which could have been oral. Certainly the treatment of the *gopī* theme is idiosyncratic enough to suggest such a possibility.

The third act of the Bc opens with a *praveśaka*, an introductory scene, in which an old cowherd (OC) relates to Dāmaka (D), another cowherd, some of the miracles the boy Kṛṣṇa had performed. But D stops this account:

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have been understood as referring to Kṛṣṇa. This does not appear to be a very forceful argument.

[105] Out of the thirteen plays, nine derive their theme from the Epics: Rāma (still a heroic, not divinified figure) appears in two, the epic Kṛṣṇa in three, and other MBh characters in a further four plays. In descriptive technique and style epic models can be detected (see Keith, 1924, pp. 112, 114). Bhāsa's metres, when compared with those of Kālidāsa's plays, show a greater *relative* frequency in epic types: *śloka* (437:75) ratio 5,8; *upajāti* (91:23) ratio 4; *śārdūlavikrīḍita*, a typical lyrical metre, shows a ratio of only 2,5 (92:36).

[106] Three further plays belong to the category 'courtly *prakaraṇa*' (Thieme, 1966, pp. 76-8). A *bharatavākya*, implying royal patronage, is found at the end of ten plays, in six cases a Rājasiṃha is referred to (Konow, 1920, pp. 51ff, tried to identify him, but was refuted by Weller, 1922 German intro. pp. 8f).

[107] See Weller, 1922 German intro. p. 14.

D Uncle! Let all that be for the moment. Today lord Dāmôdara is coming to amuse himself in this forest of *vṛndā* flowers[108] [in the dance] called *hallīsaka*, with the girls of the cowherds.

OC Then let us, with all the cowherds, watch lord Dāmôdara's *hallīsaka*!

D As you say, uncle. (*Exeunt*) [end of] the *praveśaka*.

Then the old cowherd enters again, and begins the act proper with a poem:

OC When the sun has not yet fully risen, bow down your heads in deep respect to the cows, the mothers of the world in eternity who are filled with nectar! (1)

How rich our villages[109] are! We shall go now to call our cowherd girls who are proud of their beauty and their clothes, and who are equipped with drums. Ghoṣasundarī! . . . Come here, come here quickly!

All the girls (G) enter:

G Greetings to you, uncle!

OC My girls! Here approaches lord Dāmôdara like a lion who comes out of his cave,[110] in the company of lord Saṅkarṣaṇa who is white as cow-milk, and surrounded by the cowherds.

Then enter Dāmôdara (Do) and Saṅkarṣaṇa (S), viz. Kṛṣṇa and his brother Baladeva, surrounded by cowherds.

Do (with surprise) How special the cowherd girls, who are attractive already by nature, look with their dresses!

These cowherd women, their faces like full white lilies
and eyes like open blue lotuses, radiating beauty
like gold and *campaka* flowers, with many-coloured clothes,
frolic, sweetly chattering and their hands and hair
filled with forest flowers. (2)

S The cowherd boys have come together here.

Some are standing and gleefully make a noise
on their colourful *vesuka* and *ḍiṇḍima* drums;
others are playing in many ways,
the eyes of their faces like lotus petals.
Some woke up with great delight

108 It is impossible to tell whether this is understood here already as a proper name, Vṛndāvana.

109 *Pakkaṇa*, of unknown etymology, according to MW (for *Kādambarī*) 'the hut of a Cāṇḍāla, the village of outcastes or savages'.

110 Woolner translates wrongly 'in a cave'; *nikṣipta-* means 'left, abandoned'.

in the herdsmen-station filled with lowing,
and are singing in the *vṛndā* forest just as happy.[111] (3)

OC Yes, lord, all the girls have come prepared.
D Victory to the lord!
S Dāmaka! Have all the cowherd boys come together?
D Yes, lord, they have all come prepared.
Do Ghoṣasundarī! . . . Employ (or: enjoy) this *hallīsaka* dance formation which suits the herdsmen.
G As the lord commands.
S Dāmaka! Meghanāda! Let the musical instruments be played!
both: Yes, lord.
OC Lord! You are dancing the *hallīsaka*; what am I to do here?
Do Well, you can be a spectator.
OC Yes, lord.[112]

Commenting on the delightful performance, the old cowherd cannot resist the temptation to join into the dance himself, which, as he tells us, makes him quite exhausted. But the enjoyment is soon terminated by the arrival of the bull-demon Ariṣṭa whom Kṛṣṇa kills. After that, Kṛṣṇa sets out to deal with the disaster caused by the poisonous serpent Kāliya. At the beginning of Act IV, he is about to jump into the water to fight the serpent, but he cannot help casting a glance back at the *gopīs* who are watching him:

The cowherd women follow me in fear,
since they have seen the lord of serpents;
their eyes resemble flustered young *cakora* birds
and their desirable breasts are swelling.
Lovely they are, charming with their quivering lips,
the garlands slipping from their hair.
Confused, their upper garments gliding down,
they call each other, agitated and trembling. (1)[113]

2.332 *Interpretation*

The sources which we have discussed above made it quite clear

[111] That means: their mood has not changed since they got up.
[112] See Appendix II for the Prakrit text.
[113] Metre *śārdūlavikrīḍita: etā matta-cakora-śāva-nayanāḥ prôdbhinna-kamra-stanāḥ kāntāḥ prasphuritâdharôṣṭha-rucayo visrasta-keśa-srajaḥ / sambhrāntā galit-tôttarīya-vasanās trāsâkula-vyāhṛtās trastā mām anuyānti pannaga-patiṃ dṛṣṭvâiva gopâṅganāḥ* // Act IV, verse 1.

that Kṛṣṇa's relationship with the *gopīs* was an erotic, even sexual, affair. Thus it is somewhat surprising to find here, as a light interlude between Kṛṣṇa's heroic acts, a humorous and very innocent dance, in which not only the girls, but also the boys and even an old cowherd participate. But we must not overlook the two stanzas spoken by Kṛṣṇa (III, 2 and IV, 1). He admires the beautiful appearance of the girls, and moreover (in the second verse) he hints at erotic infatuation in the girls by describing their fear in a manner that is typical of the description of erotic excitement in Sanskrit love poetry. The whole passage employs a pattern in which Kṛṣṇa is connected with the girls, while his brother is with the boys.[114] There are various ways in which this situation could be explained. It could be argued that the two Sanskrit stanzas about the *gopīs* are later additions; but since the girls' infatuation is also mentioned in the *Āycciyarkuravai*, which appears to be based on the present passage,[115] this is not very probable. Alternatively, the innocent character of the episode might be taken to be a very archaic feature, representing a stage in the development of the *gopī* myths which is earlier than the Hv. But such an evolutionistic theory would hardly agree with the kind of tribal milieu in which the story must have originated, nor indeed with the treatment of the episode in other contemporary sources (Hāla, Hv). Thus, if we accept the passage as authentic, the best explanation appears to be to assume that for some reason 'Bhāsa' toned down the erotic nature of Kṛṣṇa's relationship with the *gopīs*. The reason might have been a certain puritanical attitude (in keeping with the values of the normative ideology), but as the following observations illustrate, it was much more likely out of dramaturgical technical considerations.

2.333 *The dance*

It is here for the first time that we hear definitely about a dance of Kṛṣṇa *with* the *gopīs*,[116] called *hallīsaka*.[117] Superficially it might

[114] In the beginning, we hear of Dāmôdara's dance with the girls, but nothing about his brother and the boys. Then Kṛṣṇa describes the girls, while Baladeva the boys; he enquires after, and addresses, the girls, while his brother concerns himself with the boys.

[115] See note 101 above.

[116] In Hāla 114 (see p. 59. above, with note 24) we hear of a dance, but I suggested there that it refers to the dance Kṛṣṇa danced on Kāliya. Only a few MSS of the Hv

look as if this dance is just one of the episodes in the stereotyped list of stories which constitute the old *Kṛṣṇa-carita*, an episode closely connected with the *gopī* stories. But already the idiosyncratic treatment of the *gopīs* in the play has warned us to be more careful, and the analysis of the following two passages will emphasise this caution. The *hallīsaka* dance is mentioned also in Act IV, of the same play, after verse 6. The people of Vraja, watching Kṛṣṇa jump on the serpent Kāliya, exclaim: 'Lord! What a miracle! He has stepped on the five hoods of Kāliya and is dancing the *hallīsaka*!' [118]

This shows that 'Bhāsa' uses the name 'hallīsaka' *generally* for a herdsmen's dance. The next passage is even more illuminating. In another play attributed to Bhāsa, the *Pañcarātra*, we find another *praveśaka* scene which resembles Bc III very closely. Droṇa and other warriors have decided to steal the cattle of kiṇg Virāṭa,[119] and Act II opens with an interlude which is terminated by the actual cattle raid.[120] Once again an old cowherd appears, blessing the cows. But noticing a crow sitting on the dry branch of a tree, he gets scared by this bad omen and calls the cowherds' boys and girls. He lets them dance, praises their performance, and joins in himself. The boys and girls tease him: 'Ha, ha, uncle! How much dust you whirl up!' But he realizes that 'also the noise of conches and drums has been made to rise' [121] — the signal of the raid. The similarities to the *praveśaka* in Act III of the Bc are ample and clear: the old cowherd, the boys and girls, the dance,

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entitle chapter 63 'hallīsaka-krīḍana' (see note 72 above); since that name does not occur anywhere else (having been replaced by 'rāsa') we may assume the influence of the *Bālacarita*.

[117] The root seems to be *hall-*, which is found in Prakrit, etc., in *hallai*, etc., 'to move, shake' (see Turner, Nos. 14017f. and compare Nos. 14001, 14003, and also 14120f.) Turner suggests DED 203 as a possible etymon, although Burrow/Emeneau do not mention this *sub* 203. Root-extensions in *-cu* (ala-cu, alai-cu, etc.) might possibly explain the *-īsa(ka)*.

[118] In Devadhar's text p. 546, lines 1f after verse 6: *acchaḷīaṃ bhaṭṭā! acchaḷīaṃ! Kāḷiaṣṣa pañca phaṇāṇi akkamanto haḷḷīṣaaṃ pakīḷadi.* (Devadhar's *Kāḷiassa* has been changed into *-aṣṣa* to make it conform with the characteristics of the dialect.)

[119] The episode is told in the *goharaṇa-parvan* of MBh IV.

[120] In Devadhar's text pp. 389-91; lines 55f report on the raid.

[121] Ibid., lines 48 and 50: *hā hā māḍuḷa! adimahantaṃ ḷeṇuṃ uppadido / . . . ṇa hu ḷeṇuṃ evvaṃ ṣaṃkkhu-dundubhi-ghoṣaṃ uppadido /* .

many phrases; both employ a Prakrit dialect not otherwise found,[122] and both appear in the same dramaturgical position (as humorous interlude between scenes of dramatic developments). The best explanation appears to be to regard this basic dance scene as a repertoire piece used by the dramatist in cases where cowherds are involved. This would then mean that in Bc III this piece is somewhat modified to allude to Kṛṣṇa's relationship with the *gopīs*, but was not intended to represent on the stage anything like a dance as part of the myth itself. At the same time, this explains also the down-tuned eroticism (which in addition would be difficult to stage in the manner the Hv describes it, and would violate the fundamental *rasas* of the drama).[123] If we accept this interpretation, we would certainly have here an interesting case in the history of Indian mythological history, where later generations, unaware of the dramaturgical technique used, interpreted the dance as a *genuine* item in the *gopī* story, and included it in the further developments of the Kṛṣṇa story.

2.334 *Religion*

From what has been said above it would make little sense to investigate religious connotations of the dance passage. On the other hand, a few remarks about the religion in general which we find in these plays are of interest for our study. Kṛṣṇa is envisaged as Bhagavān, which unifies the hero of the Bhārata war with the cowherd of Vraja. He is the god of grace who takes on human form and whose *physical touch* grants salvation, even to the demons. We find an almost mechanistic conception of grace. Thus the bull-demon Ariṣṭa ponders: 'If I get slain by Viṣṇu, I shall obtain the eternal world. *Therefore I shall fight with* him'.[124] Duryodhana is not simply killed by Bhīma through an unfair trick suggested by Kṛṣṇa (as the Epic has it), but finds salvation through Kṛṣṇa's physical presence in the club of Bhīma: 'by Hari, the friend of the world who enjoys the battle without deceit, *who entered into Bhīma's club*, have I been led to death.'[125] Hacker has coined the name

[122] See note 100, point (1) above, on the 'herdsmen's dialect'.

[123] Thus I cannot agree with Lindenau (1918, pp. 15, 24) who regards the lack of an explicit eroticism as an archaic feature of the myth.

[124] *Bālacarita* III, lines 1f after v. 13: *Viṣṇunā hatasyâpy akṣayo loko me bhaviṣyati / tasmād yuddhaṃ kariṣyāmi / .*

[125] *Ūrubhaṅga*, v. 35: *Bhīma-gadāṃ praviśya sahasā nirvyāja-yuddha-priyas (yo) tenâhaṃ jagataḥ priyeṇa Hariṇā mṛtyoḥ pratigrāhitaḥ.*

'Substanzialismus'[126] for this extremely archaic-looking conception. We shall see below[127] that in later works this non-normative idea is applied also to the *gopī* story; the anti-normative interpretation which we have detected in the Hv agrees with it in the sense that in both cases Kṛṣṇa's physical presence and bodily contact grant salvation (which is also suggested by 'sukha').

2.34 *Summary*

The various sources which we have discussed in the present section have shown that Kṛṣṇa's relationship with the *gopīs* was known during the same period as the works analysed in section 2.2. to popular religious, epic, circles also. There are however some interesting differences in the treatment of it; while only the secular tradition knows of Rādhikā and of the *gopīs'* jealousy, and while the theme of (temporary) separation may be common to both, only the epic tradition provides a religious interpretation (in the Hv) and knows of a dance (in the Bc) and of 'imitations of Kṛṣṇa' by the *gopīs* (in the Hv) who thus find happiness also in representational forms of his beauty. Unlike the secular poetic tradition, which will continue into the second millennium AD, the epic tradition about the *gopīs* (except for a few additions to the Hv) will soon be swallowed by another one, the purāṇic tradition (which will be discussed in the next section 2.4); both the Hv and the Bc versions have nevertheless had considerable influence not only on this purāṇic development, but also on South India. This influence concerns the themes of the myths, but — what is much more important — also the religious interpretation; as we have seen, the Hv (and indirectly also 'Bhāsa') employ a non-, or even anti-normative form of religion.

2.4 The purāṇic tradition: the gopī story in the Brahma- and Viṣṇu-Purāṇa

The enormous mass of purāṇic literature was reduced to certain original portions by Kirfel.[128] Among these, the *Purāṇa* of Five

[126] See 1959, pp. 92, 107f, 200f; compare 1965, pp. 101-5.

[127] See p. 534, note 153. below.

[128] See Kirfel, 1927, p. xx. Kirfel mentions three major portions: the *Purāṇa-pañcalakṣaṇa* (PurPañc), a work on cosmography and geography, and the *Śrād-*

Topics (*purāṇa-pañcalakṣaṇa*) is of interest to us, since the Kṛṣṇa story became attached to it. The fifth of these *lakṣaṇas* deals *inter alia* with the history of the sun- and moon-dynasties. Yadu figures as one of the great ancestor kings in the lineage of the moon (*soma-vaṃśa*),[129] and one of his descendants was Sāttvān whose sons, among others, were Vṛṣṇi and Andhaka.[130] Kṛṣṇa's mother Devakī, and possibly his father Vasudeva, were descendants of Andhaka.[131] But the earliest layers in the PurPañc have little to say about Kṛṣṇa, in fact mention no more than the *syamantaka* episode[132] and his ancestors.[133] Four *purāṇas* add, at the very end of the *soma-vaṃśa* account, further information about Kṛṣṇa[134]

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dhakalpa. These three are regarded by Kirfel as the oldest material, which the individual *purāṇas* incorporated and inflated on an enormous scale. With later works, e.g., the BhP or the fourteenth century *Brahmavaivarta-Purāṇa*, the verbal repetitions are replaced by more idiosyncratic rephrased portions.

[129] The history of the Yādavas is told in Kirfel, 1927, pp. 410-81, =*Brahmāṇḍa-Purāṇa* II, 69, 1–71, 265 with the parallels in other *purāṇas*.

[130] Ibid., p. 432, =ibid., II, 71, 2a.

[131] The lineage of Kṛṣṇa's mother Devakī is as follows: Andhaka-Kukura-Vṛṣṇi-Kapotaromā-Tittiri-Punarvasu-Abhijit-Āhuka; the last one had two sons, Devaka whose daughter was Devakī, and Ugrasena whose son was Kaṃsa, Kṛṣṇa's enemy (see Kirfel, 1927, pp. 452, No. 16 to 459, No. 56). Vasudeva's ancestors cannot be traced back beyond his father Śūra (Kirfel, 1927, p. 457, No. 42); the difficulties lie mainly in corrupt MSS readings, and alternative versions. The MBh mentions both Devamīḍha and Citraratha as Śūra's father (see Sørensen *sub* Śūra). Gonda, 1960, p. 237, may be right in suggesting that Vasudeva is only an artificial construction of a father's name on the basis of the name Vāsudeva.

[132] This story is found in seven *purāṇas* (see Kirfel, 1927, pp. 437-48); it follows naturally after the mention of Prasena and Satrājit in the last verse of the previous section.

[133] Again this passage is shared by seven *purāṇas* (see Kirfel, 1927, pp. 449-71). There is, however, a difference of sequence in some works: BrP, Hv, and the *Agni-Purāṇa* insert the *syamantaka* story into this account, while the other four works let this account follow after the *syamantaka* episode. That *Brahmāṇḍa-Purāṇa* II, 71, 195 (and parallels) did in fact conclude the oldest account on Kṛṣṇa is borne out not only by the fact that the following section is found only in four works, but also by the concluding verses themselves. On p. 463 (No. 72) we hear: 'who recites this birth of Kṛṣṇa', and on p. 471 (No. 62) 'who proclaims the birth and rise of Kṛṣṇa'.

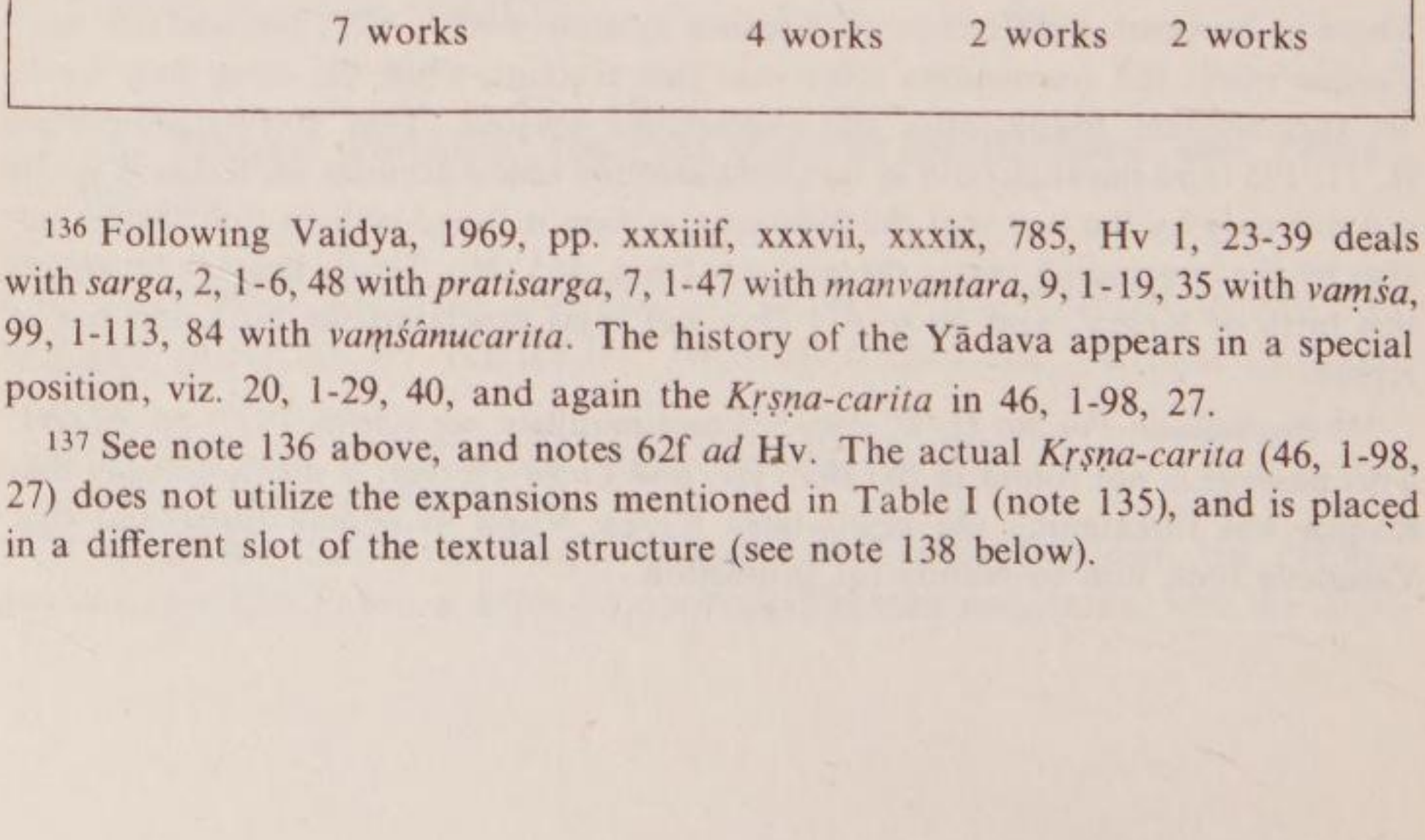
[134] *Brahmāṇḍa-Purāṇa* II, 71, 196-265 and parallels, see Kirfel, 1927, pp. 472-81. This passage is not found in the BrP, Hv, and *Liṅga-Purāṇa*; it mentions only that Kaṃsa was threatening the newly-born Kṛṣṇa, Viṣṇu in human form, and that Vasudeva took him to Nanda for protection.

which in two of them was expanded.[135] But even this expansion (of seventy verses) does not give anything like a life-story of Kṛṣṇa; we hear hardly more than that he was rescued from Kaṃsa and had many wives and sons.

It follows from these textual considerations that the full account of Kṛṣṇa's life among the cowherds in Vraja was not part of the original PurPañc but of independent origin. When the Hv, even in its constituted text, presents such a *Kṛṣṇa-carita* within the context of developed *pañcalakṣaṇa* structure,[136] this can be interpreted as possibly the first combination of an independent *Kṛṣṇa-carita* with purāṇic material.[137] Once such a combination had been achieved, it had its feedback on other evolutes of the PurPañc,

[135] Only in the *Brahmāṇḍa-* and *Vāyu-Purāṇa*; this passage now mentions the exchange of the children, Vasudeva substituting the dead girl of Yaśodā for Devakī's Kṛṣṇa. Kirfel thinks that a passage found only in the *Brahmâṇḍa-* and *Vāyu-Purāṇa*, viz. vv. 223-35, which explains the persecution by Kaṃsa and motivates it, is even by a later hand; see Kirfel, 1926, pp. 298-316. Table I may illustrate the situation:

TABLE I



[136] Following Vaidya, 1969, pp. xxxiiif, xxxvii, xxxix, 785, Hv 1, 23-39 deals with *sarga*, 2, 1-6, 48 with *pratisarga*, 7, 1-47 with *manvantara*, 9, 1-19, 35 with *vaṃśa*, 99, 1-113, 84 with *vaṃśânucarita*. The history of the Yādava appears in a special position, viz. 20, 1-29, 40, and again the *Kṛṣṇa-carita* in 46, 1-98, 27.

[137] See note 136 above, and notes 62f *ad* Hv. The actual *Kṛṣṇa-carita* (46, 1-98, 27) does not utilize the expansions mentioned in Table I (note 135), and is placed in a different slot of the textual structure (see note 138 below).

the 'purāṇas' of a later date. The earliest example of an expanded version of the *Kṛṣṇa-carita* in the Hv is found in two *purāṇas*, the *Brahma-* and *Viṣṇu-Purāṇa*.[138] In this passage we also find a longer version of the *gopī* story which for various reasons deserves a detailed analysis here.

[138] The *Viṣṇu-Purāṇa* has a somewhat inflated version, but those passages which are not found in the *Brahma-Purāṇa*, are, according to Kirfel (1926, p. 300) 'deutlich von zweiter Hand'. I find it impossible to decide whether this version of Kṛṣṇa's life was originally an independent work, which was then independently integrated into the two *purāṇas*; whether it was part of the ViP and adopted by the BrP, or *vice versa*. Since the *gopī* passage agrees in its religion very closely with that of other parts of the work, and since the whole life-story appears somewhat out of place in the BrP (see below), one could argue that it is original to the ViP and was taken from there into the BrP, before in ViP the interpolations were added; yet even this does not mean, that it belongs to the oldest strata of the ViP. Table II may illustrate the individual position of the *Kṛṣṇa-carita* in the works which we are discussing here.

TABLE II

syamantaka:	Bḍ II, 71, 21-99	Hv 2043-2130	BrP 16f	ViP IV, 13 9-71
geneology:	100-195	1908-2039	14-16	14, 1-15
Kṛṣṇa's birth, Yaśodā, Kaṃsa:	196-265	----------	----------	15, 1-26
Viṣṇu:	II, 72	2136-98	----------	----------
Kṛṣṇa-carita	----------	3001 . . . . . (=46, 1-98, 27)	179-212	V, 1 . . . . .

The table shows quite clearly that all three works, Hv, BrP, and ViP, insert the *Kṛṣṇa-carita* after the passage of the *PurPañc* where the subject matter is dealt with. In the ViP it is added immediately (Book V), but in the Hv, and particularly in the BrP, a considerable amount of other material intervenes. Kirfel (1926, p. 299), speaking of the various *Kṛṣṇa-caritas* in the *purāṇas* in general, states that they agree in content only, but not — as the portions of the *PurPañc* — also in their text and its wording. They are therefore late and may be considered the product of a particular 'Kṛṣṇa-Epik'. Kirfel does not clarify what he means by that term; when Ruben

It is difficult to give a precise date to this passage, but various general considerations suggest the period AD 500-700 as the most probable range.[139] The provenance appears even more elusive, although the north-west of India may be more likely than other regions.[140]

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uses the same term, he does not explain its meaning either, although his theory of an original 'Kṛṣṇa-Epik' can be inferred from his approach found in 1939 and 1944. His assumption seems to be that the various *Kṛṣṇa-caritas* found in Hv, BrP, ViP, BhP (but 1944, p. 271 he acknowledges a literary dependence of BhP on ViP), *Padma-* and *Brahmavaivarta-Purāṇa* are independent extensions of an archetype, and that this archetype can be reconstructed by simply reducing the various versions to the stanzas they have in common, or at least are very similar in all of them. If this is indeed what Ruben had in mind, it cannot be accepted, since certainly for Br/ViP a literary dependence on Hv, and for BhP on ViP, can be assumed. The manner in which BrP introduces (compare notes 58f above) its version of the *Kṛṣṇa-carita* after chapters 71-178 (on places of pilgrimage) is interesting. The sages praise Vyāsa's account of the *tīrthas* and marvel at the qualities of India which possesses them. But their minds are not yet at rest, and they tell him that there is still something else bothering them. 'In this world of death, which has no essence (*sāra*), which is full of suffering (*duḥkha*) and very transient, resembling a water-bubble and frightening, — how could they (=Kṛṣṇa etc.) find delight in the most dreadful "living in the womb", smeary from faeces and urine, disastrous, dangerous, and causing but suffering (*duḥkha*)?' (vv. 7f) 'How could Viṣṇu become a man? . . . How could the refuge of all beings obtain a human body?' (vv. 63f) Thus this lengthy introductory passage (179, 1-64) is inspired by a typically Buddhist problem: how can the transcendental Absolute partake of the misery of *saṃsāra*.

139 We can ignore here vague arguments for a date of the 'final compilation' of the ViP which Gail for example (1969, pp. 10f) have proposed. A reference to the Huns (said to have entered India in AD 428) in the ViP yields very little evidence for the dates of the individual layers of the ViP. More useful for our purposes is an argument of Hacker (1959, p. 128; compare pp. 89, 90 note 1, 121ff, 127, 146, 193f). He suggests that once Śaṅkara's philosophy had gained popularity, Buddhist allusion in Hindu works would be very unlikely. This would suggest a *terminus ad quem* for BrP 179 of *c.* the 7th century AD. If the *Kṛṣṇa-carita* (BrP 179-212) was not original to that *purāṇa* (see beginning of note 138), the passage itself could be somewhat older. A safe *terminus a quo* is provided by the Hv which clearly served as the literary model for the passage which thus cannot be older than *c.* the late 5th or 6th century AD. Another safe *terminus ad quem* for the interpolation 3* in the ViP is provided by the *Veṇīsaṃhāra* of the 8th century (see pp.106f. 110. below).

140 As we have seen, mainly Southern MSS of the Hv have the reading *pati* (Hv 63, 24) which occurs also in Br/ViP No. **46**. But also a Śāradā MS has that reading; compare note 92 above. The *rāsa* dance, which is here introduced for the first time, would point to the north-western region of India. A South Indian origin is also unlikely for the reason that the Āḻvārs betray no knowledge of the *gopī* story as found in Br/ViP. That, on the other hand, the ViP was known in the South by the ninth century AD is borne out by the BhP and also by Yāmuna (*Stotraratna* v. 4).

2.41 *The episodes of the milkmaids*

In the *Kṛṣṇa-carita* which was added to the *Brahma*-(Br) and *Viṣṇu*-(Vi) *Purāṇa*, eighty verses speak about the *gopīs*. Table III may illustrate their position in the *Kṛṣṇa-carita* and their relationship with the Hv.

Table III

	Section A: the *rāsa-krīḍā*		Hv 63, 15-35
	BrP 189, 14-45 =	ViP V, 13, 14-61	Hv
1)	14	14	
2)	15	15	(15)
3-7)	16-20	16-20	
8f)	-----	21.22 = 1*	
10)	21	23	(35)
11)	22	24	
12-15)	-----	25-28 = 2*	
16)	24	29	
17)	23	-----	
18-28)	-----	30-40 = 3*	
29)	25	41	(25)
30-45)	26-41	42-57	
46)	42	58	=24
47)	43	59	(18)
48f)	44.45	60.61	
	Section B: the departure of Kṛṣṇa (added to Hv 70)		
50-70)	BrP 192, 12-32 = ViP V, 18, 12-32		
	Section C: the visit of Baladeva (added to Hv 83)		
71-80)	BrP 197, 11-20 = ViP V, 24, 11-20		

The table shows that Section A derives its inspiration from the passage of the Hv which has been discussed in 2.32.[141] But Sections B and C are new; at two points in the Hv narrative, further reference to the *gopīs* is made, and it is here that we find the first definite mention of their *final* separation. Three passages (1*-3*) are unique in the ViP;[142] they describe in greater detail the *gopīs'* behaviour.

[141] I have mentioned here only the more obvious similarities; in many more smaller phrases and expressions the influence of the Hv can be noticed.

[142] No. **17** is unique to the BrP, while the ViP has replaced it by a longer passage 3*.

Section A :[143]

(1) But when Kṛṣṇa looked at the clear sky, at the light of the autumn moon, at the pond of water-lilies that were in blossom and perfumed the four quarters,

(2) and at the row of trees lovely through the garlands of humming bees, he turned his mind to making love to the *gopīs*.

(3) Śauri sang a sweet song in a *rāga* which was delightful to women and the range of which covered all three octaves.

(4) When the *gopīs* heard the entrancing music of the song, they left their homes and came quickly to where Madhusūdana was waiting.

(5) One *gopī* joined gently, gently in his song; and another girl remembered none but him, all her attention given [to it].

(6) One girl said 'Kṛṣṇa! Kṛṣṇa!' and then felt embarrassed; another one, blinded by love, went to his side without any shame.

(7) Another girl remained inside her house, when she saw her father outside, and with her eyes closed, meditated on Govinda, getting entirely absorbed into him.

(8) 1* The heap of her good deeds having vanished through the intense pleasure of thinking of him, all her sins removed through the great pain of not meeting him,

(9) another cowherd girl obtained *mukti*, while she thought breathlessly [of Him], the cause of the world, as being essentially *parabrahman*.

(10) Surrounded by the *gopīs*, Govinda who was eager to begin the *rāsa* and (eager for) [its] pleasures, paid due honour to the night that was delightful with the autumn moon.

(11) Crowds of *gopīs* whose bodies were performing the deeds of Kṛṣṇa [or: the *Kṛṣṇa-deeds*] went into the Vṛndā forest, when Kṛṣṇa had gone to another place.

(12) 2* (Their hearts fixed upon Kṛṣṇa, they said this to each other:) 'I am this Kṛṣṇa, I walk [in his] amorous [manner]; look at my gait!' Another one said: 'Listen to this song of mine, Kṛṣṇa's!'

(13) 'Wicked Kāliya! Stand still here; I am Kṛṣṇa.' [said] another one, and slapping on her arm she began to recite the whole of Kṛṣṇa's *līlā*.

(14) Another girl said: 'You cowherds! Stay here without any fear;

[143] Since there is no critical edition available and the readings of ViP and BrP, and there again of individual MSS, vary, I have attempted to reconstruct a provisional text on the basis of available printed editions. See Appendix III for this Sanskrit text.

the danger from the rains is over: here I am carrying the Govardhana!'

(15) 'See, Dhenuka has been thrown into the air [and thus killed] by me; let the cows [now] roam about as they like!' said another one, imitating the *Kṛṣṇa-līlā*.

(16) The *gopīs* who were engrossed in this way in the manifold deeds of Kṛṣṇa, then together went through the lovely Vṛndā forest.

(17) (Then these *gopīs* who were longing to see Kṛṣṇa, discovered during the night in the Vṛndā forest the footprint of Kṛṣṇa, O brahmins! and they became perplexed.)

(18) 3* One *gopī*, the wife of a cowherd, looked on the ground and with her whole body covered with bristling hair and with eyes like lotuses wide open, said:

(19) 'Friends, look at these footprints of Kṛṣṇa who walks playfully in his amorous sports, footprints which have lines from the marks [on his feet], the flag, thunderbolt, goad, and lotus.

(20) A girl who [must have] done good deeds [in a former life, to be so lucky], languid from passion, has met him and these are her footsteps, placed close together and rather delicate.

(21) Here Dāmôdara must have reached upward to pluck flowers, since here the footprints of the great-souled one (*mahâtmā*) show only the toes.

(22) Adorned with flowers, some girl sat down here along with him: she [must] have worshipped Viṣṇu, the soul of the Universe, in a previous life.

(23) Look! the son of Nanda the cowherd went along this path, after he discarded her who had become proud on account of the honour of [his] tying flowers [into her hair].

(24) Here another girl, who is following him, has slowed down under the weight of her buttocks, and [then] she went quickly to catch up with him, imprinting the toes deeply.

(25) Friend, and this girl walks with her fingers put into his hand: [his] row of footprints can be seen as having the feet placed in short intervals.

(26) This girl has been slighted by that rogue through the mere touch of his hand; the feet can be seen to have been turned backwards by her, walking slowly from despair.

(27) Now Kṛṣṇa must have said to her: 'I hurry, I come back to you!' since these steps show hurry.

(28) Kṛṣṇa has entered a cave, his steps cannot be seen here; return, since the moonlight does not shine here!'

(29) Then the *gopīs* returned, depressed at not seeing Kṛṣṇa, and came to the bank of the Yamunā; [then] they sang his *carita*, brahmins!

(30) Then the *gopīs*, with face-lotuses wide open [from joy] saw him coming, Kṛṣṇa the protector of the three worlds who is untainted by his work.[144]

(31) When one girl saw Govinda coming, in her great delight she exclaimed: 'Kṛṣṇa! Kṛṣṇa! Kṛṣṇa!' with wide-open eyes.

(32) Another looked at Hari, frowning, and her eye-bees drank his face-lotus.

(33) One girl closed her eyes when she had seen Govinda and meditated on just his beauty; she looked like someone absorbed in *yoga*.

(34) Then Mādhava guided fitly some girls through nice words, some through frowning looks, and others through the touch of his hand.

(35) With these *gopīs*, whose minds were [now in this way] pacified, Hari of noble deeds enjoyed himself respectfully in the gathering of the *rāsa*.[145]

(36) The circle [required for] the *rāsa* dance [could] not be formed by the *gopīs*, since they did not [want to] leave the side of Kṛṣṇa and since their persons remained fixed in one place.

(37) [Therefore] Hari took one *gopī* after the other by her hand, whose eyes closed under his hand's touch, and [thus could] form the *rāsa* circle.

(38) Then the *rāsa* dance went round in due order, and its songs for which poems on autumn were sung, were accompanied by the tinkling of the moving bracelets.

(39) Kṛṣṇa sang about the moon of autumn and about the ponds of water-lilies in the moonlight; the *gopīs*, on the other hand, sang nothing but 'Kṛṣṇa!' again and again.

(40) One *gopī*, out of fatigue from moving round (in the dance) placed her creeper-like arm that tinkled with the moving bracelets[146] on the shoulder of the killer of Madhu.

(41) One clever *gopī*, with playful arms, under the pretext of praising his song, embraced and kissed Madhusūdana.[147]

(42) When the arms of Hari came into contact with the cheeks of the *gopīs*, they turned into clouds filled with the water (in the form) of sweat for the crops (in the form) of their bristling hair.

(43) While Kṛṣṇa sang the song of the *rāsa* dance, his voice moving into the higher octaves, the *gopīs* sang: 'Well, Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa!', increasing the tempo.

[144] *Akliṣṭa-kārī*: while ordinary action would produce *kleṣas*, 'stains', Īśvara's acting is not affected in this manner. See Frauwallner, 1953, p. 423, and compare 1.41.

[145] Only in later texts *goṣṭhī* was interpreted as a type of dance. We can also translate: 'who had come together in the *rāsa*'.

[146] *Var.*: 'which is hot from the bracelets rubbing over it.'

[147] See Hāla 114, discussed in 2.211 with note 23; the present *śloka* is almost certainly derived from it.

(44) When he moved backward, they followed him; when he turned round, they faced him; in backward and forward movements, the cowherd wives clung to Hari.

(45) Madhusūdana had such fun with the *gopīs*, that even a second without him was like a million years.

(46) These wives of the cowherds, fond of pleasure, enjoyed themselves with Kṛṣṇa during the nights, although they were hindered by their parents, husbands, and brothers.

(47) And Madhusūdana paid honour to [his] youthful age; of immeasurable self, destroying everything unpleasant, he dallied with them in the nights.

(48) [But as] the Lord (*īśvara*), in the form of his true essence, he pervades their husbands, them, and all beings, and he indwells the All;

(49) just as ether, fire, earth, water, wind, and the *ātman* pervade all beings, so He pervades and indwells the All.

Section B:

(50) Then in the clear morning, (Bala-)Rāma and Kṛṣṇa, of great strength [*vars*: light; minds] started to depart for the town of Mathurā along with Akrūra.

(51) When the *gopīs* saw [this] with tears in their eyes, their bracelets loosened on their arms, they sighed and in great agony they said this to each other:

(52) 'Once Govinda has arrived in Mathurā, how will he return to Gokula? His ears will drink the intoxicant of the sweet talk of the town women.[148]

(53) 'How could his mind, once it has cosily settled in the many kinds [*var*: in the drinks] of amorous talk of the town women, return to the rustic *gopīs*?

(54) 'Wicked and merciless Fate strikes at [us] the wives of the cowherds by taking away Hari, who is the essence of the whole herdsmen's station.

(55) 'Words accompanied by smiles and pregnant with love, an amorous and infatuating walk, and above all that way of looking with sidelong glances — [all this is characteristic] of the town women.

(56) 'This Hari, of rustic origin, [will be] fettered by the chains of their flirtations; by what device of yours will he come back to your[149] side?

(57) 'This Keśava has already climbed on the chariot and is leaving for Mathurā, persuaded by the desperate and cruel Uncruel (=Akrūra).

(58) 'Does that wicked fellow not know about people in love, that he takes away our Hari, the bliss for the eyes, to some other place?

[148] 'Town' implies here and elsewhere sophistication, artfulness, etc.; the simple *gopīs* feel that they will be unable to compete with those 'ladies'.

[149] Fem. pl.; the logical 'our' is replaced by the 'your' to indicate that this particular *gopī* feels superior to the rest.

(59) 'That Govinda, cruel to the extreme, has climbed along with Rāma on his chariot and is setting off. Quickly, let us hold him back!

(60) 'Why do you speak of talking to the elders? We could not do that. [Anyway,] what would the elders do for [us] who are consumed by the fire of separation?

(61) 'Those cowherds, headed by Nanda-gopa, are making a move themselves. Nobody makes any attempt at turning Govinda back.

(62) 'The night today [will be] very bright for the women living in Mathurā, because the bees of their eyes will find enjoyment in the lotus-face of Acyuta.

(63) 'Fortunate are they who can, without being held back, see Kṛṣṇa on the way when he is going away from here; they will carry their own bodies covered in horripilation.

(64) 'Today there will be a very great feast for the eyes of the citizens of the town of Mathurā because they will see the face of Govinda.

(65) 'What sleep [pun: what a dream!] is seen by those fortunate women, who will see without restraint — their lovely eyes wide open — Adhokṣaja?

(66) 'Alas! The creator, whose heart knows no compassion, has pulled out today the eyes of these *gopīs*, after he has shown them a great treasure (= Kṛṣṇa).

(67) 'Hari has become lax (*śaithilyam*) in his love towards us; in the same way (*api*) the bracelets on our arms become quickly loose (*śaithilyam*).

(68) 'Akrūra, of cruel heart, quickly drives the horses on; who would not feel compassion for women who are suffering in such a way?

(69) 'Alas! Let us look at the dust thrown up by the wheels of Kṛṣṇa's chariot! Hari is so far away, that even the dust cannot be seen any more.'

(70) Keśava left the Vraja locality in the company of Rāma, while he was watched by the *gopīs* (who were speaking) in this way out of very great affection.

Section C:

(71) The cowherds said many nice things to Halâyudha. Some *gopīs* spoke in love-anger, others full of jealousy.

(72) Some *gopīs* asked him: 'The lover of the town women — Kṛṣṇa, filled with the bliss (*rasa*) of his unsteady love, is he well?

(73) 'Making fun of our behaviour, does he, the friend of [only] a moment, not cause excessive pride in the urban women on account of [their] (sexual) success?

(74) 'Does Kṛṣṇa remember how we softly followed his songs? Will he even once come to see his mother?

(75) '— Yet what is the use of lamenting about this! Let us do other matters.

Without him, there will be for us what is to him without us (viz. a happy life).

(76) 'Did we not abandon, for his sake, father, mother, brother, husband, and relatives? Thus he is ungrateful.

(77) 'However, does Kṛṣṇa say anything that would suggest his coming here? You must tell us Kṛṣṇa's intentions!

(78) 'We shall hardly see this Dāmôdara, Govinda again, [since] his mind is attached to the town women and his love for us has vanished.'

(79) Addressing him [viz. Baladeva, wrongly] as 'Kṛṣṇa' and again as 'Dāmôdara', the *gopīs* laughed sweetly [about these mistakes which they made] because their thoughts were abstracted by Hari.

(80) (Bala-)Rāma consoled the *gopīs* with Kṛṣṇa's messages which were sweet like songs, filled with affection, humble, and very gentle-sounding.

2.42 *Interpretation of the passage*

Unlike Hv 63, 15-35, this passage deals with the *gopīs* in a full narrative which has a recognizable plot. Around the skeleton *ślokas* of the Hv version, the author has constructed a complete story by adding further themes, some of which can be traced back to their origins. Furthermore, the story has now acquired a pronounced religious significance, but unlike the versions found in the Hv and Bc, it conforms to the normative ideology.

2.421 *Treatment of the story*

The narrative starts, as in the Hv, with a description of the beauty of the autumn nights which is conducive to amorous sentiments. The few remarks on Kṛṣṇa's music are expanded, and his songs have become the incentive for the *gopīs* to come out into the night to be with Kṛṣṇa. But before they can actually enjoy dancing with him, he disappears somehow[150] and the girls search for him. Suddenly Kṛṣṇa reappears; a scene of affectionate greetings takes place. Then all start the dance which is specified as the *rāsa*. The dance has a clear erotic overtone, but the author does not miss the opportunity to provide a theological justification of the — otherwise immoral — event. The Hv forgets about the *gopīs* after this blissful union; the purāṇic author shows greater sympathy

[150] I wonder whether the phrase *anya-deśa-gata* in No. **11** is not meant to be a rendering of *raty-antara-gata* in Hv 63, 32, which was possibly obscure to the purāṇic author. However, we could also think of Hv 63, 29 *Vraja-gata*. On *viraha* in the Hv in general see p. 75. above with notes 86f.

and sensibility, and adds the sorrowful words of the girls and women when Kṛṣṇa departs for Mathurā. They have a premonition of what will happen: he will never return to them. They are depicted as incapable of seeing in his departure and permanent absence the logical conclusion of Kṛṣṇa's mission on earth. Instead, they can only express their fears that he will forget about them, because he will become infatuated with the coquettish townswomen. The girls watch his chariot depart, until even the dust vanishes over the horizon. Yet another passage is added to the Hv frame: when Baladeva comes to Vraja for a visit, the *gopīs* enquire after Kṛṣṇa. In a mixture of anger, jealousy, curiosity, and frustration they reveal a deep longing and suffering, which nevertheless resolves itself in humour when the girls have to laugh at their mistake in addressing Baladeva as 'Kṛṣṇa'. Even if this final touch of redeeming laughter somewhat dulls the edge of the *gopīs'* suffering, the story as developed here is remarkable and unique: no conventional solution in terms of physical fulfilment, no stereotyped 'happy ending' is suggested, only final separation (*viraha*).[151]

A few remarks on the interpolated passages 2* and 3* may be made. The first one derives its stimulus from v. **16** 'engrossed in Kṛṣṇa's deeds',[152] interpreting it literally as 'pretending to be Kṛṣṇa, imitating his deeds'. The obscure remark in v. **11**, 'when Kṛṣṇa had gone to another place' suggested the situation for this play of the girls: temporary *viraha* induces them to recall his presence by acting out his deeds. The second interpolation (3*) seems to derive its inspiration from a curious misunderstanding (or mistake in the MS used by the author). While the BrP at No. **17** makes the lapidary remark that the *gopīs* saw Kṛṣṇa's 'foot-print' (*caraṇam*) in the night, the ViP interpolation develops a whole episode out of this. I am tempted to see in this 'caraṇam' an original 'caritam',[153] viz. 'actions'.

The present version makes it clear that some of the *gopīs* were married.[154] Thereby the courage and the sacrifice of the *gopīs* has been emphasized, but it remained nevertheless a problem for

[151] The word itself occurs in No. **60**.

[152] *Kṛṣṇa-ceṣṭāsu vyagrāḥ*; the particular interpretation given to this in 2* appears influenced by Hv 63, 27: *cerur vai caritaṃ tasya Kṛṣṇasya*.

[153] See Hv 63, 22: *caritaṃ dṛṣṭvā*.

[154] No. **46** adds *pati* to the various relatives mentioned in Hv 63, 24, and No. **76** refers again specifically to these husbands.

the author, who resorts to Vedânta ideas to explain and justify this: they sported with him who is the soul of their husbands.[155]

Comparing the eroticism of the present passage with that of the Hv version, it appears much more subdued here. The root *ram*, which occurred eight times in the Hv, appears here, in a much longer passage, only four times. Earthy *ślokas* like Hv 63, 30 are entirely ignored. On the whole a sublimation of the sexual into the erotic has taken place here:[156] physical contact has been reduced to *mental* identification, separation, and singing *about* such contact.

The most important innovation is Kṛṣṇa's *dance* with the *gopīs*, called *rāsa*.[157] Kṛṣṇa and the girls form a circle[158] and move round in clockwise, and anti-clockwise, movements.[159] There are particular songs sung during the dancing, which deal with the autumn: 'songs for which poems on the autumn were sung', 'sang about the autumn moon', 'songs of the *rāsa* dance'.[160] The author shows his acquaintance with music by technical terms like *tāra*, *rāga*, and *dviguṇa*.[161] The description of the dance itself does not suggest, however, that the actual gestures and movements themselves were Kṛṣṇaite, viz. symbolized Kṛṣṇa's deeds, etc.[162] In fact, the *rāsa* as art form is known from other sources as well, and a study of the available evidence[163] suggests that the purāṇic author had in mind a contemporary dance form which he projected on the mythical material. The *rāsa* is described in other sources as an art form (viz. combining music, dance, poetry, and

155 One is reminded here of *Bṛhadāraṇyakôpaniṣad* IV, 5, 6: 'the husband is not dear for its own sake; the husband is dear for the sake of the *ātman*. . . .'

156 As we shall see below, even this *eros* is sublimated in bhakti.

157 The name is found in Nos. **10**, **35**, **36**, **37**, **38**.

158 *Maṇḍala*, mentioned in Nos. **36**f.

159 Nos. **38** and **44**. From **38** it is clear that the *gopīs* are reluctant to leave Kṛṣṇa's side and form a circle. But it is difficult to say whether in the mundane *rāsa* each girl had her own male partner or not. Raghavan seems to have the BhP version in mind when he says (1965, p. 562): 'Pairs take part in it; *for* (my italics) Kṛṣṇa multiplied himself and kept company with each of the *gopikās*'. In Hv 63, 25 we find *dvandvaśaḥ* 'in pairs', but this is said only about the *gopīs*.

160 No. **38**: *śarat-kāvya-geya-gītir*, **39**: *śarac-candramasaṃ jagau*, **43**: *rāsa-geyaṃ jagau*.

161 Nos. **3.43**; **3**; **43**.

162 The earliest known example of a 'rāsa' with a Kṛṣṇaite theme belongs to the tenth century AD; see below, Appendix IV. p. 604.

163 This is discussed in detail in Appendix IV.

metrical patterns) which appears to belong to north-western India and to the Apabhraṃśa milieu, dealing with the seasons of autumn and the rains, and with separation. We may then assume that the author of the purāṇic passage was influenced by Bhāsa's *hallīsaka* and by Hāla's ambiguous reference to a dance to interpret the verses of the Hv as describing a dance (which he depicts as a *rāsa*). Moreover it can be argued that a certain feedback from the theme of separation typical of the *rāsa* encouraged the author to elaborate on the vague suggestions of *viraha* in earlier sources[164] and also to develop the emotional implications for the *gopīs* of Kṛṣṇa's final departure. That the *rāsa* and final separation are themes introduced into the myth at a very specific point in the literary development is corroborated by a study of the later works which belong to the secular poetic tradition and, on the whole, ignore these themes (see 2.5 below).

2.422 *The love of the gopīs*

A convenient way of analysing the description of the *gopīs*' love in the present passage is by comparing it with a schema that had been established by this time: the ten stages of love in separation. In slightly different form, both the eroticians[165] and the theoreticians of poetry[166] used it. Projecting these categories on our passage, we obtain the following picture.[167]

(1) Delight of the eyes at seeing the lover (*cakṣuḥ-prīti*): v. **30**: 'with face-lotuses wide open [from joy], the *gopīs* saw him coming'; v. **31**: 'in great delight, with wide-open eyes'; v. **32**: 'her eye-bees drank his face-lotus'.[168]

(2) Concentration of thoughts on the lover (*manaḥ-saṅga*): v. **7**: 'with eyes closed, she meditated on Govinda'; v. **5**:

[164] We found indications in Śyāmilaka and less clearly in Hv 63, 24-9.

[165] See Schmidt, 1902, pp. 124f, 128, 131. Their schema, probably the earlier version, is found, for example, in the *Kāmasūtra*, *Kandarpacūḍāmaṇi*, *Ratirahasyam*, *Anaṅgaraṅga*.

[166] This second schema is found, for example, in the *Nāṭyaśāstra*, *Smaradīpikā*; see Schmidt, 1902, pp. 128f. The difference between the two schemata is noted by Kumārasvāmī in his commentary on the *Pratāparudrīya* (IV, 73).

[167] I have used the first schema here; variations in the second one will be noted in the footnotes.

[168] Compare Hv 63, 19 and 32, and pp. 75f. above on the religious interpretation derived from this. The Hv does not really go beyond this first stage. Schema B has *abhilāṣa* 'desire for the presence of the lover'; we may compare No. **17** 'eager for the sight of Kṛṣṇa', and Hv 63, 24 and 32.

'she remembered him in her mind'; v. **33**: 'having seen Govinda, she meditated on his form with eyes closed'.[169]

(5) Emaciation (*tanutā*): v. **67**: 'our bangles become loose'.

(6) Withdrawal from all sense-objects (*viṣayebhyo vyāvṛtti*): vv. **7.33** 'with eyes closed'; also v. **33** 'as if engrossed in *yoga*'.[170]

(7) Loss of shame (*lajjā-praṇāśa*): v. **6**: 'without shame'.[171]

This distribution shows clearly that the passage restricts itself to the limits of ordinary psychology and avoids the higher stages of the schema (mental confusion, dissociation, unconsciousness, panic, death). In spite of *viraha* being final, the *gopīs* undergo only the lower stages of the psychology of 'love in separation'. On the other hand, the description of 'love in union' utilizes stereotyped symptoms like 'horripilating' (vv. **18.42.63**) or 'sweating' (v. **42**) of secular love poetry.

What seems to be an incongruous situation, viz. final *viraha* producing no more than the early psychological states of 'love in separation', finds its explanation in another, and more important, schema which has been projected on the narrative: that of *yoga*.[172] The first stages of 'love in separation' are illustrated here precisely because they offer parallels to, and points of contact with, the *aṣṭâṅga-yoga*. The sensual, sensuous bliss of the *gopīs*, derived from Kṛṣṇa's physical presence, is transitory; even while it lasts, it is interrupted by temporary separation, and comes to a definite end when he departs for Mathurā. From the purely human point of view which the *gopīs* express, their lover is a 'rogue', 'without any mercy at all', 'filled with the enjoyment of momentary love', 'ungrateful', and a 'friend for only a moment'.[173] Somehow they try to take the blame away from him and accuse Akrūra and fate,[174]

[169] Schema B has *cintanam* 'constant thinking of the lover' and *anusmṛti* 'remembering him'; with this we may compare in 1* No. **21** 'through the thought of him' and **22**: 'thinking', and in No. **5** 'she remembered him in her mind'.

[170] On withdrawal from the sense-objects as fifth stage of *yoga* see below in note 175.

[171] Schema B has as the sixth stage *vilāpa* 'lament', with which we can compare the whole of sections B and C.

[172] The word itself is mentioned in No. **33**; compare note 175 below.

[173] In **26**: *dhūrta*, **59**: *atyanta-nirghṛṇa*, **72**: *calat-prema-rasâkula*, **76**: *akṛtajña*, and **73**: *kṣaṇa-sauhṛda*.

[174] In **57**: 'misled by the ruthless, cruel Akrūra', **58**: 'that wicked one', **68**: 'Akrūra of cruel heart'; in **54** we hear: 'merciless, wicked fate (*vidhi*) has struck', and in **68**: 'pitiless fate (*vidhātṛ*) tears out our eyes'.

but — and that is much more important — they sublimate the pains of their separation by *thinking* about him. Withdrawing from the world of senses, they meditate solely on him, concentrate their mental faculties on him, and find happiness in their minds. These are the final four stages of *yoga*: *pratyāhāra* (withdrawal of the senses), *dhāraṇā* (concentration of the mind on one point), *dhyāna* (stability and clarity of mental perception), *samādhi* (final, liberating insight).[175] That this is what the author was really interested in becomes clear from, for example, v. **33**: although Kṛṣṇa is present, one *gopī* closes her eyes and meditates on him.

So far the emotional reaction of the *gopīs* has only been *compared* to *yoga* (v. **33**: 'she looked *like* someone absorbed in *yoga*'). But the whole passage makes it abundantly clear that Kṛṣṇa, the lover of the *gopīs*, is more than a human lover. The variety of names employed testifies to his identity with Viṣṇu,[176] he is characterized as the Absolute[177] and as the goal of man's destiny, liberation or salvation.[178] This means that the *gopīs* by meditating on *this* Kṛṣṇa *de facto* meditate on the Absolute,[179] and that makes their thinking of him real *bhakti-yoga*.[180] This means also that the

[175] See Frauwallner, 1953, pp. 431-3. We may compare Nos. **7** and **33** (withdrawal of the senses); **5**: 'with all their attention' (*dattâvadāna*), **16**: 'oblivious to anything but...' (*vyagra*), **36**: 'with a mind fixed to one point' (*ekasthāna-sthirâtmanā*) with *dhāraṇā*; and the root *dhyā* 'to meditate' is found in **7** and **33**. The final stage, *samādhi* is implied in No. **7**: 'getting entirely absorbed into him' (*tanmayatvena*).

[176] The Hv passage had Kṛṣṇa 11 times, Dāmôdara 3 times, and Govinda once. The present passage has: Kṛṣṇa (37), Hari (10), Govinda (9), Madhusūdana (4), Dāmôdara (3), Keśava (2), and once: son of Nandagopa, Viṣṇu, Mādhava, Madhuvighātī, Acyuta, and Adhokṣaja.

[177] In No. **30** we find: 'protector of the three worlds' and 'unstained by his actions'; in **47**: *ameyâtmā* 'immeasurable soul'; in **48** and **49**: 'pervading the all', and in **22**: *sarvâtmā* 'soul of the all'.

[178] No. **8** states that *puṇya* is destroyed by the bliss, and *pāpa* by the suffering that are implied in loving Kṛṣṇa, and that *mukti* is obtained when the twofold *karma* is thus destroyed. No. **7** uses the term *tanmayatva*; it has its origin in the Upaniṣads (e.g., *Svetāśvatara* V, 6; VI, 17; *Muṇḍaka* II, 2, 4). In the ViP it occurs at I, 20, 1: compare Hacker, 1959, pp. 74, 106f, note 4 of p. 106. It does not imply here ontological identity, but an eschatological merging with Viṣṇu.

[179] No. **9** is not sufficiently clear to allow a decision whether the author means that the *gopī* herself is aware of Kṛṣṇa's identity with *para-brahman* and obtains *mukti* because of that awareness, or whether it is the author's own comment, implying that the mere thought of Kṛṣṇa, even when regarded only as 'cowherd', is sufficient.

[180] Like the ancient *śramaṇas*, the *gopīs* had to 'abandon their homes' (No. **4**), 'abandon their husbands and relatives' (No. **76**), in order to 'cling to him' (*bhejur*,

physical presence of Kṛṣṇa among the *gopīs* is almost accidental: it serves no other purpose than to stimulate through the various miraculous and wonderful deeds[181] their meditation *about* them and him. Thus the *gopīs*, unknowingly, practise intellectual bhakti, as it has been defined with reference to the *Gītā* and other parts of the ViP,[182] and their behaviour is made to conform to the normative ideology, as can be seen from the manner in which the physical love of the girls (who in the Hv still 'run after Kṛṣṇa like female elephants chase the male') has been transformed into an erotic love (the *rāsa* representing a symbolic, almost mystical, form of union) and into *bhakti-yoga*. It now becomes clear that for this sublimation of love a situation of *viraha* is essential, because in it all external, physical stimuli have been removed; that intellectual bhakti (induced by that separation) offers no scope for the intensified 'ecstatic' behaviour of the higher stages of 'love in separation'. Yet in spite of all this, the author has succeeded in creating a story which has also an immediate appeal and is attractive as a piece of literature. He presents the *gopī* episode on two levels, a religious and a human one. As a human love story (and that means, as a piece of literature)[183] it ends in tragic misery and suffering; but as a religious metaphor it can hint at the final happiness which the *gopīs*, as the ideal *bhaktas*, obtain.

— √ *bhaj*, in No. **44**). The relationship between the *gopīs* and bhakti is explained in ViP I, 20, 18f: 'Let my bhakti always be towards you... The transient pleasures which people without discrimination [find] in the sense-objects, may that (same pleasure) never go away from the heart of me who remembers you!' Compare Hacḳer, 1959, p. 93, note 7.

181 As passage 2* shows, his presence is not essential, because even in his absence, the *gopīs* make those deeds (his walk and songs, his defeating Kāliya and Dhenuka, and lifting of the Govardhana, etc.) present in their enacting them.

182 See above, 1.42 and 1.5. The expressions denoting a basically mental activity, viz. *smṛ*, *cint*, and *man*, are also frequent in our passage here: *cint* (Nos. **8f**), *cetas* (No. **79**), *manas* (No. **5**), *smṛ* (No. **5**), etc. For further expressions see note 175 above.

183 The success of the passage also as a human love-story derives from a clear interest of the author in the secular poetic tradition of poetry. Not that this induced him to alter the basic motifs of the myth (as he found it in the Hv), e.g., by adding Rādhikā. But wherever his source allowed for an extension by poetic means, he made use of that, by resorting to the *rāsa*, paraphrasing a stanza of Hāla, and exploiting the lower stages of the schema 'love in separation'.

2.43 *Summary*

The version of the *gopī* story which we find in the BrP, and in a slightly longer form in the ViP, is the first example of a full narrative treatment of the episode, and at the same time, of a religious interpretation in terms of normative ideology. The myth itself has become enriched by two major themes, the *rāsa* dance and final *viraha*. The author has remained faithful to his source, the Hv, by ignoring the figure of Rādhikā and the *gopīs'* jealousy, but by emphasizing the *viraha* theme and sublimating the *gopīs'* love as a form of *bhakti-yoga* he has removed the earthiness of the original story and eliminated the primary importance of Kṛṣṇa's physical presence among the *gopīs* and of their sensuous perception of him. As direct, and in fact sole, literary source of the version found in the BhP, this passage is of particular interest in our present discussion.

2.5 The secular poetic tradition II: AD 500-1000

The previous three sections analysed only six documents, which were arranged according to three or four categories ('traditions'). Such a procedure, by itself, would hardly carry much conviction and will have to appear arbitrary, unless it can be shown that features which have been described as idiosyncratic for one tradition or as individual innovations remain constant for a greater number of documents and even at a later period. The present section will pursue this line of argument for sources belonging to the second half of the first millennium AD. This allows us, at the same time, to establish a fairly representative picture of the material which theoretically was available to the Āḻvārs and the BhP, or better, in view of our findings in Parts 4 and 5, which in practice was unknown to them and thus can be excluded as sources of inspiration. Of particular interest here are the following themes: Rādhikā who, as I have claimed, is typical of the secular poetic tradition alone; the *rāsa* and final *viraha* which I have postulated to be innovations unique to the Br/ViP passage. It would certainly be also of interest if these later sources presented the mythical themes in a religious context, but no examples are known to me, so that the label 'secular' appears appropriate for this tradition.

Thirty-eight individual source fragments are discussed here; a more intensive search will yield more, but even this present set is large enough to allow for reasonable generalization. The greatest

continuity during the whole of the first millennium is shown by the Prakrit poetic tradition; Sanskrit poetry is less willing to deal with the *gopīs* up to the 9th century AD, when the frequency increases. Towards the close of this period a third literary tradition enters the stage, Apabhraṃśa poetry.[184]

2.51 *The thirty-eight source fragments*

The following catalogue separates the sources according to language, and provides the abbreviations which will be used here.

Prakrit (P 1 to 19):

P 1: Vākpati's *Gaüḍavaho*, 22;[185] refers to the marks of Rādhā's nails on Kṛṣṇa's chest.

P 2: Jayavallabha's *Vajjālaggam*,[186] 590; Kṛṣṇa by mistake calls a girl 'Rādhā'.

P 3: Ibid., 591; the *gopīs* long to embrace Kṛṣṇa.

P 4: Ibid., 592; memories of Rādhā's love-making.

P 5: Ibid., 593; Kṛṣṇa prostrates himself at a *gopī's* feet.

P 6: Ibid., 594; advice to a *gopī* to go to him in the night.

P 7: Ibid., 595; Rādhā cherishes the blouse which Kṛṣṇa touched with his elbow that was bloody from killing Keśī.[187]

[184] It is clearly impossible, and in fact unnecessary, to analyse each fragment in the same detailed manner as in sections 2.2 to 2.4. Discussion of dates, provenance, authorship, and textual problems has been avoided on the whole; where absolutely necessary, this will be found in the footnotes. Also translations of the stanzas are only provided where we have an example of literary dependence.

[185] The poet wrote at the court of Yaśovarman of Kanauj, *c.* AD 725.

[186] This anthology of Prakrit *gāthās* is clearly later than, and in fact modelled on, the *Sattasaī*, of which it quotes a number of stanzas. A *terminus a quo* for the compilation is *c.* AD 750, since the anthology quotes v. 722 of the *Gaüḍavaho* (see previous note); comp. Patwardhan p. xxi in his edition. The *terminus ad quem* can however be brought back from 1337 AD (Patwardhan, ibid.) to *c.* AD 1050, since Bhoja (*Sarasvatīkaṇṭhābharaṇa* II, 351, see Banerji's edition of the *Saduktikarṇâmṛta* p. 76) quotes v. 590 in Sanskrit (*upagīti*), which suggests that he knew it from a *chāyā*; such a *chāyā* existed more likely for the whole anthology than on an individual verse. It is clear, that many of the verses could be older than AD 750; but on the whole style and language reflect those of a later age than Hāla. The frequent mention of the camel and the Vindhya would point to north-western India as the place of origin of at least a considerable portion of the stanzas.

[187] The *gopī* is here (and in P 10-12) called 'Viśākhā' and Patwardhan, in his notes on the verse (p. 545), says 'a certain cowherdess'. Indeed much later works (e.g.,

P 8: Ibid., 596; Rādhā kisses Kṛṣṇa passionately.
P 9: Ibid., 597; a *gopī* thinks of Kṛṣṇa while selling milk.
P10: Ibid., 598; Rādhā wears Kṛṣṇa out.
P11: Ibid., 599; Rādhā clings to his hand.
P12: Ibid., 600; similar to 598.
P13: Ibid., 601: 'Even if the dance-circle gets broken up, and the *rāsa* is interrupted, my hand will not, O Kṛṣṇa! let go of your hand which I have got hold of through a hundred acts of worship.'[188]
P14: Ibid., 602; advice to a *gopī*: don't weep, Kṛṣṇa like all gods is of stone.
P15: Ibid., 603; even in Mathurā, Kṛṣṇa remembers the *gopīs*.
P16: Ibid., 604; a *gopī* insults him, calling him 'ābhīra'.
P17: Ibid., 605: 'Do you remember, O Kṛṣṇa! how you put on my loin-cloth [by mistake], when we were bathing in the Yamunā? Now that you rule as king in Mathurā, I doubt you will even speak to me.'[189]
P18: Ibid., 605*1;[190] Rādhā bears Kṛṣṇa's weight.
P19: Ibid., 605*2; the Yamunā has darkish water because of Rādhā's collyrium which was swept away by her tears.

Sanskrit (S 20 to 35):

S20: Māgha's *Śiśupālavadha* XVI, 8;[191] Kṛṣṇa slept with the wives of the cowherds.
S21: Bhaṭṭa-Nārāyaṇa's *Veṇīsaṃhāra* I, 2:[192] 'Kṛṣṇa followed

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the Bengal Vaiṣṇavas) know of a Viśākhā. But there is no reason to assume this here, for an almost contemporary work (Hemacandra's *Abhidhānacintāmaṇi* II, 26) states that *viśākhā* is a synonym of *rādhā*, both denoting the same *nakṣatra* (see also MW *sub rādhā*). The choice of this synonym becomes clear from P 10-12, which are all punning verses; Viśākhā allows for puns with 'staff' and 'poison'.

188 *Vihaḍaü maṃḍali-baṃdho 'bhajjaü rāso na muccae Kaṇha / navasiya-saehi laddho' tuha hattho majjha hattheṇa //* On *navasiya* see Patwardhan's notes *ad* v. 423 (p. 492). When he suggests (p. 547, notes on 601) that *maṇḍali°* and *rāsa* are synonymous, he is clearly unware of the Br/ViP passage; compare also Bc, prose after III, 3, *hallīsaka-nṛtta-bandha*. Thus *rāsa* denotes the type of dance, and *maṇḍali-bandha* the particular formation of the dancers in a circle.

189 *Saṃbharasi Kaṇha Kāli'ṃdi-majjaṇe maha kaḍilla-paṃguraṇaṃ / eṇhiṃ Mahurā-rajje' ālavaṇassâvi saṃdeho //* Patwardhan translates (p. 360) *ālapana* by 'call me by my name'; MW does not record such a meaning of the word.

190 This and the following stanza are found only in MS C of Patwardhan's edition.

191 The author lived during the early 7th century, but his provenance is unknown.

192 The poet lived in the eighth century AD, and may have worked in Kanauj; he was

Rādhikā who in playful anger had lost interest in the *rāsa* and was walking on the sand of the Yamunā, shedding tears; his body hair bristled in excitement when he placed his steps into her foot-prints. . .'

S22: *Saduktikarṇâmṛta* 287;[193] Kṛṣṇa, singing, relishes the new love of Rādhā.

S23: Ānandavardhana's *Dhvanyāloka* II, 9[194] = *Subhāṣitaratnakośa* 808;[195] similar to P4: memories of Rādhā's love-making.

S24: Ibid., II, 26; a *gopī* tries to lure Kṛṣṇa.

S25: Ibid., III, 51; Rādhā rejects Kṛṣṇa in jealousy.

S26: Srk 129 = Ska 288 = Pv 152: '. . . singing songs of bull-fights as he decks his hair with flowers, looking with rapt attention at the fighting of a pair of bulls that swell with pride. . . .'[196]

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probably from Bengal. *Kālindyāḥ pulineṣu keli-kupitām utsṛjya rāse rasaṃ gacchatīm anugacchato 'sru-kaluṣāṃ Kaṃsa-dviṣo Rādhikām/tad-pāda-pratimā-niveśita-pada-syôdbhūta-romôdgater. . . .//*

[193] Abbreviated *Ska* here. This anthology was compiled AD 1205 (see colophon in Banerji's edition, p. ix) at the Vaiṣṇava-inclined Sena court in Bengal by Śrīdhara-dāsa. It is well-known that author ascriptions found in anthologies are not very reliable and thus in all those cases below where a poem is given a date not because it is the *terminus ad quem* of the work quoting the poem, but because it is the date of the alleged poet, this date cannot be assumed to be safe. Information on the individual poets is derived from Kosambi/Gokhale, 1957, pp. lxviii-cvi; Sharma, 1933 (introduction); Banerji, 1965 (index of authors); Peterson, 1961, pp. 1-131; De 1934, pp. 181-241. The present poem is ascribed to Udbhaṭa, a poet from Kashmir of the 8th century.

[194] This fixes the *terminus ad quem* to *c.* AD 825; this work on poetics belongs to Kashmir; it does not mention the name of the poet.

[195] Abbreviated *Srk* here. Probably the oldest anthology of Sanskrit poetry, compiled *c.* 1100 in Bengal by Vidyâkara, a Buddhist monk. See Kosambi/Gokhale, 1957 and Ingalls, 1965. Only MS K ascribes the poem to Vidyā, a poetess from South India.

[196] Srk ascribes it to Yogêśvara, Ska to Sonnoka. Both poets belong to a group of Bengal literati who between AD 800 and 900 developed a particular style of poetry which is characterised by a pronounced realism in their descriptions of village life and poverty. On this genre see Ingalls, 1954 and 1965 (pp. 142, 145). Poems S 26 to S 30 belong to this genre, although they deal with a mythological theme; Kṛṣṇa as 'cowherd' could be envisaged, and be described, within a 'realistic' setting. *. . . gāyan go-yuddha-gītīr uparacita-śiraḥ-śekharaḥ pragraheṇa / darpa-sphūrjan-mâhôkṣa-dvaya-samara-rasâbaddha-dīrghânubandhaḥ . . .* (reading of Ska, trans. by Ingalls).

S27: Srk 139; Kṛṣṇa sends the other *gopīs* away, to be alone with Rādhā.[197]

S28: Srk 140=Ska 296=Pv 264; proud Rādhā watches him lifting the mountain Govardhana.

S29: Ska 298; Rādhā tries to help him, when he is holding up the mountain.[198]

S30: Ska 267; he amuses himself with Rādhā.[199]

S31: Somadeva's *Yaśastilaka* III, 204;[200] Kṛṣṇa lusted for the *gopīs*.

S32: Ibid., IV;[201] Rādhā slept with Nārāyaṇa.

S33: *Daśarūpaka* IV, 60=Ska 265=Pv 372; similar to P 2: he speaks to Rādhā in his dream, when sleeping with Śrī.

S34: Abhinavagupta's *Locana*[202]=Ska 289=Pv 373; Rādhā sings a song of separation, when Kṛṣṇa has gone to Dvāravatī.

S35: Bhoja's *Sarasvatīkaṇṭhâbharaṇa* V, 448=Ska 304; similar to S33: he is afraid to mention Rādhā in front of Śrī.

Apabhraṃśa (A36 to 38):

A36: Puṣpadanta's *Mahāpurāṇa* 88, 14, 7[203] refers to Rādhikā.

A37: Hemacandra's *Siddhihaimacandram* IV, 420, 4; Rādhā has fallen in love with Kṛṣṇa.[204]

[197] This and the following S 28 are ascribed to Sonnoka in Srk.

[198] Ascribed to Śatânanda, another of the Bengal realistic poets (first half of the ninth century).

[199] Ascribed to Abhinanda, the son of Śatânanda (see previous note).

[200] This work was written in AD 959 in Melpāṭi (North Arcot District, Tamilnadu, under king Kṛṣṇa III of the Rāṣṭrakūṭa dynasty. Vol. I, p. 447.

[201] Vol. II, pp. 141f. The mythological reference is used here by a woman to defend love over and above the duties of a wife to a husband whom she was forced to marry, but did not love.

[202] On *Dhvanyāloka* I, 4, (p. 83). The date of the *Locana* is *c.* AD 1000.

[203] Vol. III, p. 113; the work was composed *c.* 970 in south-east Andhra.

[204] Hemacandra belongs to the twelfth century, and thus is later than the date we have chosen here as the upper limit. It is however well-known that in his grammar he quotes many examples which are much older. The present verse is clearly taken out of a larger work on Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa, which is now lost. Compare Pischel, 1880, p. 216. Trivikrama (thirteenth century) quotes the verse in his grammar (see p. 254, v. 53).

A38: Ibid., IV, 422, 6; Kṛṣṇa always looks at Rādhā.[205]

These fragments cover a surprisingly large area of India: connected with Kashmir are S22.24f.34; with the North-West P2-19; with Mālva S33; Gujarat A37f; Kanauj P1; Dhārā in Central India S35; Bengal S21.26-30; South Andhra A36; Tamilnadu S31f; and the South in general S23. The works which have preserved S31f, A36ff are overtly Jain and also P2-19 belong to a nominally Jain anthology. S23.26-28 are quoted in a nominally Buddhist anthology, while S23-25.33-35 are quoted in works on poetics; P1, S20f may be said to belong to Hindu works, and S22.29f are quoted in a Hindu anthology. Many of these poems are functional: proverbs are P5.14f.18; prayers to begin a literary work are P1-4.S21f.24-30.33.35; the remaining stanzas are accidental references to the *gopīs*, or solitary survivors from larger works now lost. S26-30 belong to a special category of 'realistic poems'.[206] Many stanzas allude to episodes which are not otherwise documented[207] or introduce an erotic flavour into episodes which in the epic and purāṇic versions of the *Kṛṣṇa-carita* are without this erotic touch.[208] The stimulus for the latter tendency must be sought in the conventions of Sanskrit poetics which define an autonomous poetic landscape, its 'inhabitants' and their stereotyped behaviour.[209]

2.52 *Interpretation*

Perhaps the most striking feature which this survey reveals is an almost universal knowledge of Rādhā; she is mentioned in 25 out of 38 fragments: P1f.4.8.18f S21ff.25.27-30.32-35 A36-38 (and as 'Viśākhā' in P7.10-12). On the basis of this evidence I think

[205] Compare Pischel, 1880, p. 219; Trivikrama, p. 269 v. 91; Alsdorf, 1937, pp. 55f.

[206] On this genre see note 196 above.

[207] For instance P 3: the *gopīs* embraced Kṛṣṇa in panic, when the bull-demon Ariṣṭa approached; P 7: his arm touched Rādhā after killing Keśī; P 17: when playing in the water, he put on *her* loin-cloth; S 27: he is left alone with Rādhā by subterfuge; A 37: he is made to dance in a courtyard.

[208] Examples are P 3 and 7; S 28f: Rādhā admires him while holding up the mountain, and tries to help him. This affected even the eternal Viṣṇu, see S 33 and 35.

[209] Typical examples of these in our present poems are: the nail-marks (P 1); the mixing up of names (P 2; S 33 and 35); the *khaṇḍitā* and her confidante's advice (P 14); love-quarrel (S 21); the *dūtī* (S 25).

it is justified to regard the figure of Rādhikā or Rādhā as characteristic of this poetic tradition. On the other hand, only two fragments refer definitely to final *viraha*:[210] P17 and S34. The second verse mentions Rādhā; and that in the context of an episode which as such is alien to the more commonly known versions of the *Kṛṣṇa-carita*,[211] and thus the verse can be excluded from our present discussion. This leaves P17 as the sole example of final *viraha* of the *gopīs*, and this *gāthā* is almost certainly derived from the ViP.[212] This would, then, confirm our assumption that the theme of final *viraha* was introduced into the *gopī* myth by the author of the Br/ViP version. Equally rare are the references to the *rāsa*; it is mentioned only in P13 and S21. In the first *gāthā*, the *gopī* speaking is not named; it is almost certainly derived from the ViP.[213] The same may be assumed for S21,[214] only that now Rädhā is mentioned. Obviously the borderline between the different traditions was not so fixed that an imaginative poet could not combine themes from different ones (here: Rādhā and the *rāsa*); what is more important here is the fact that *only one* poet did so and that in fact also at a later date such combinations occurred very tentatively.[215] Thus our initial assumption, that the *rāsa* dance became associated with the purāṇic tradition through the innovation by the author of the Br/ViP passage appears to be confirmed through both stanzas. Finally, S26 is interesting since it appears to betray a literary influence from Hv 63, 16; described

[210] Temporary *viraha* occurs more frequently, although it is often difficult to decide whether this is the particular situation envisaged in a poem, or jealousy, or a love-quarrel, all of which produce — naturally — copious tears. See, for example, P 3; 9; 14; 16; 19; S 34; in all these stanzas, for some reason or other, a *gopī* is 'separated' from Kṛṣṇa.

[211] According to a relatively old passage in the *PurPañc* (Kirfel, 1927, p. 463), Kṛṣṇa has to abandon Mathurā and flee to Dvāravatī because of his enemy, king Kālayavana. Thus 'Dvāravatī' is a theme that does not originally belong to the cycle of Vraja myths.

[212] Compare Br/ViP No. **74**. It is very unlikely that P 17 was the source of the stanza in the *purāṇas*, because the *gāthās* in the *Vajjālaggam* on the whole appear to belong to a later date, and because P 17 seems to elaborate on the theme of No. **74**.

[213] Compare Br/ViP Nos. **36**f; again (as in the case of No. **74**, see previous note) P 13 seems to elaborate on the purāṇic verses, and cannot be the original.

[214] The addition of Rādhā, and the imaginative twist, make this stanza later than ViP 3*, No. **8**.

[215] See below, section 5.5.

here in a 'realistic' setting, this bullfight is clearly understood as a fight of two bulls with each other.[216]

This survey allows us to draw two general conclusions. First, the characterisation of different traditions which was attempted in sections 2.2 to 2.4 seems to be valid also for a later period, viz. up to 1000 AD. The secular poetic tradition remained on the whole independent of the epic and purāṇic ones, while at the same time it illustrates a general tendency to impose themes on the *gopī* story which are characteristic of the stereotyped love poetry formulated by the poeticians. Secondly, none of the fragments gave us any indication that they were originally part of an overtly religious context or had anything to do with a bhakti cult. Proverbs, introductory blessings, 'realistic' poems, and a few *subhāṣitas*—this circumscribes more or less their function and their *Sitz im Leben*. Moreover, none of them suggested that they had been influenced by the BhP in their treatment of the *gopī* themes. This appears to confirm our assumption that a period of a few hundred years intervened between the rather idiosyncratic religious interpretation of the *gopī* myth in the Br/ViP passage and the mysterious BhP which connects the myth with a very different type of religion and which up to *c.* AD 1000 has not exerted any influence on the Northern scene.

2.6 Summary

The picture which the previous sections have attempted to delineate covers almost the whole of the first millennium AD. In the light of Parts 3 to 5, it emerges clearly that this picture is too large and that only certain facets of it would have been sufficient for an understanding of the origins of emotional bhakti in South India. Yet for various reasons this detailed analysis undertaken in Part 2 need not be considered superfluous. Certain assumptions which were made concerning the few early sources would hardly have been convincing without the corroborative evidence of later works; only a well-structured account of the Northern situation will allow us to determine possible stimuli from the North and possible lines of influence from the South concerning the Āḻvārs and the BhP; and finally, if we were to pursue the post-BhP developments,

216 This is important since the Tamil sources (as also in the interpolated passage No. 12 of the Hv) mention another type of 'bullfight', viz. Kṛṣṇa's fighting with one

we would notice that also in the North the independent traditions merge together in typical expressions of emotional Kṛṣṇa bhakti (see 5.5, 6.1 and 6.2 for brief sketches of these developments). But above all, Part 2 has shown that in the North emotional bhakti is unknown until AD 1000.

Our analysis has shown that the development of the *gopī* myths was not monolinear, but took place in a number of independent traditions. The word 'tradition' itself has been used in two slightly different meanings, denoting either a series of individual poems etc. which follow traditional conventions and themes, or a sequence of additions and interpolations in a 'text' or text-nucleus. Synchronically, these traditions can be regarded as different milieux; our material showed that there was relatively little interaction between these different milieux, and this situation makes it unlikely that the South should have come to know *all* different versions of the *gopī* myths.

We have encountered three fundamentally different versions of the *gopī* episode. The epic tradition is restricted to the love-making of Kṛṣṇa with the *gopīs*; the secular poetic tradition knows the figure of Rādhikā as Kṛṣṇa's favourite *gopī* and increasingly imposes the conventions and themes of Sanskrit poetics on their relationship, including the theme of temporary separation. The purāṇic tradition ignores Rādhikā and some of the more earthy aspects of Kṛṣṇa's love-making, but introduces the *rāsa* dance and the theme of final *viraha* into the myth. But the differences between the secular poetic and the purāṇic traditions concern more than just themes in a story; they are potentially ideological. That means, in the secular poetic tradition Kṛṣṇa's love-making appears in the context of earthy, uninhibited sexual enjoyment, something that strikes against the very roots of the normative ideology towards which the purāṇic tradition is inclined. Moreover, once a precise theory about the function and purpose of this (secular) poetry was formulated, the question had to arise how these related to religion in general, and the religious implications of poems dealing with Kṛṣṇa and the *gopīs* in particular. If a fusion of these two, of which we saw certain initial examples in our present material,[217] could establish itself, these problems would have to

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bull, or seven ones. Thus Edholm/Suneson (p. 49) are not correct in equating the fight mentioned in Hv 63, 16 with the Southern bullfight.

[217] The examples are: Hāla 114 used in Br/ViP No. **41**; the usage as literary model

be solved, while such a combination would certainly reflect a different type of religion.

It would be useful if we could determine the media by which these story versions and the works containing them were diffused. Unfortunately, our information is rather meagre. At least it is clear, as Kirfel has convincingly shown,[218] that the purāṇic tradition (and that includes here also the Hv) was handed down through *manuscripts* and was not purely oral. A combination of manuscripts and orally transmitted poems may be assumed for the secular poetic tradition, which explains the great variation and individual liberty in the treatment of the story. The Bc was most likely transmitted through dramatic performances. But it appears doubtful whether information (in itself difficult to interpret) belonging to a much earlier period can be used to envisage the concrete professional ramification of means of spreading the knowledge of texts.[219] It is however clear that there is no foundation for the assumption that the Indian drama originated in early Kṛṣṇaism, as has been suggested in the past.[220]

None of the sources discussed so far show any trace of 'ecstasy', not even on the poetic or mythical level. The Hv remains on a

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or source of the Hv passage by Br/ViP, and the introduction of the *rāsa*; S 26 alluding or paraphrasing Hv 63, 16; S 21, P 13 and 17 elaborating on Br/ViP Nos. **8**, **36**f, **74**.

[218] See 1927, pp. xlviiif: '. . . so ist dadurch die Hypothese von der Jahrhunderte langen mündlichen Tradition größerer Texte in Indien erschüttert.'

[219] Pāṇini (IV, 3, 110) refers to *naṭas* and their *sūtras*. Patañjali (*ad* Pāṇini III, 1, 26, *vārttika* 15, =Kielhorn, vol. II, p. 36; *ad* III, 2, 111, *vārttika* 2, =Kielhorn, vol. II, p. 119) accidentally mentions three groups of artistes: the *śobhikas*, *citra* (*-kāras*), and *granthikas*. The meanings of the first and third term are rather obscure, and that by itself might suggest that we are dealing here with popular forms of art and entertainment. Patañjali himself informs us about the *śobhikas* only in so far as he says: 'they have Kaṃsa killed before the eyes (of the audience)', from which we can infer some form of visual representation. About the *granthikas* we can gather from him that they are concerned only 'with the expansion of the word', 'illuminate the objects of the mind', which indicates a verbal performance appealing to the imagination of the listeners. Thieme, defending a hypothesis originally put forward by H. Lüders, interprets the *śobhikas* as puppet, or better, shadow-puppet players (1966, pp. 30-4). Vaudeville (1968, p. 758 and 1975, p. 113) derives from Patañjali's remarks about the *granthikas* the incredible theory that Kṛṣṇa's cowherds were originally worshippers of Durgā! What we can derive from Patañjali is however, that already in the 2nd century BC a rich variety of popular art forms and professional artistes existed. Compare also Gonda, 1943.

[220] C. Lassen assumed the origin of the Indian drama to lie in the Kṛṣṇa cult (discussed Winternitz, 1920a, pp. 118-25; there also a discussion of A. Weber's,

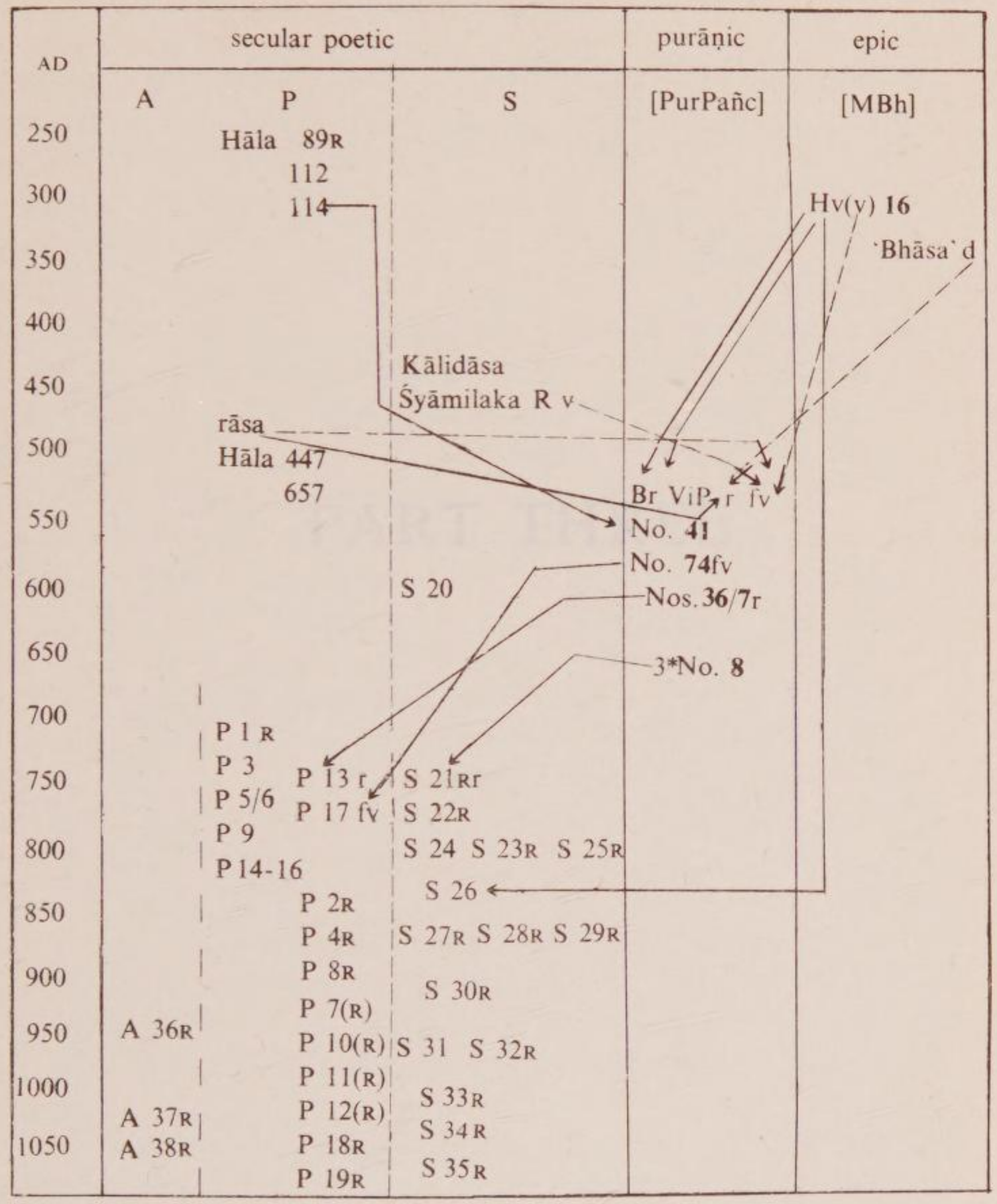
purely physical sensuous plane, while the Br/ViP passage sublimates the *gopīs*' love in intellectual bhakti. The higher stages of the schema 'love in separation' known to the poeticians and eroticians, which do express a form of ecstasy, have nowhere been imposed on the treatment of the *gopīs*' love. Thus the present material does not allow us to get a glimpse of ecstatic bhakti, in which the myths discussed here will figure so prominently. But we must not overlook certain initial indications and suggestions of emotionalism. In the Hv, the *gopīs* quench their 'thirst' by 'drinking' Kṛṣṇa's beauty through their eyes and obtain thereby (transcendental) happiness; in Kṛṣṇa's absence, songs, dances, and plays are substitutes for that beauty which becomes manifest through the descriptions and imitations. By simply labelling the Br/ViP passage 'intellectual bhakti', other aspects of the work may not be done full justice; it is possible to sense in the lament of the *gopīs* at and after Kṛṣṇa's departure, in the way the poetry presents it, that somehow a real and tragic loss occurs which cannot be fully overcome in yogic exercise. The BhP will certainly increase this hidden tension of the passage.

Table IV may summarize the results obtained in the previous discussions.[221]

H. Lüders', and A. Hillebrandt's theories about it). Winternitz (ibid. pp. 123f) refutes Keith (ZDMG 1910; JRAS 1912) who even in 1924 (pp. 31, 36, 48) maintained that the Indian drama originated in the Kṛṣṇa cult. Compare Bhandarkar, 1874, Konow, 1920, p. 45, and Gonda, 1943. Ruben, as late as 1940 (pp. 221-4) regards the *hallīsaka* and the *rāsa* as 'einen Keim des indischen Dramas'! The arguments are partly based on Patañjali's reference to two pieces which belonged to the repertoire of the *śobhikas*, etc. (see previous note), viz. the *Bali-bandha* (compare Hāla 425) on Vāmana, and the *Kaṃsa-vadha* on Kṛṣṇa. But these are accidental references, made in the context of grammatical discussion. The discovery of the *Bālacarita*, and the subsequent 'Bhāsa-problem' then contributed to the discussion. I would consider Weller's statement (1922, German trans. p. 11) still the most valid summary of the situation: 'Wenn das indische Drama aus dem Kṛṣṇakult hervorgegangen wäre, so würde Bhāsa mit seinem *Bālacarita* nicht so vereinzelt dastehen. Volksmäßige Tänze, Pantomimen und dgl. [Weller refers here to Lindenau, 1918, pp. 41ff, for traces of these in Bhāsa], die die Taten Kṛṣṇa's zum Gegenstand hatten, mag es freilich schon lange vor Bhāsa gegeben haben.'

[221] Ruben (1944, p. 278) arrived at a chronological sequence of some of the works mentioned here by simply comparing the various incidents in Kṛṣṇa's childhood and their description in these sources; his sequence differs totally from ours: *Harivaṃśa* — *Viṣṇu-Purāṇa* (beginning of the Gupta era) — *Bālacarita* (at the time of Kālidasa)

Table IV[222]



— *Padma-Purāṇa* (slightly later than the previous work; but see Part 1, note 126 above) — *Bhāgavata-Purāṇa* (thirteenth century!).

222 The following abbreviations are used in the table:

A = Apabhraṃśa; P = Prakrit; S = Sanskrit.

R = Rādhikā; (R) = Viśākhā.

v = *viraha*; (v) = possibly v; fv = final *viraha*.

d = the *hallīsaka* dance; r = *rāsa*.

Broken lines indicate possible influences, unbroken lines fairly certain ones.

PART THREE

Māyōn̲:
the god of the jasmine landscape
(Kṛṣṇaism in *caṅkam* literature)

Kṛṣṇa's *amours* with the milkmaids — the mythological theme which has so far been traced in its developments from Sanskritic sources through the first millennium AD — initially constituted no more than one facet of the extremely variegated and complex cultural and religious influences to which the South of India became increasingly subjected from the last few centuries BC onward. We could imagine a troupe of actors, perhaps staging the *Bālacarita* at the court of a Southern king, bards narrating to local chieftains the exploits of Kṛṣṇa as described in the *Harivaṃśa*, travellers bringing back with them some poems about the *gopīs*, or Vaiṣṇava brahmins practising in their *agrahāra* near a Tamil village the *bhakti-yoga* of the *Gītā*. Through these and other channels Kṛṣṇaism infiltrated the South; but the Tamils integrated it and transformed it by bringing their own cultural and religious traditions to bear upon it. Although the awareness remained alive that the *amours* took place 'on the spacious sandy banks of the Yamunā in the North, rich with water'[1], these mythical symbols, besides changing their names (Kṛṣṇa became Māyōn̲,[2] and Yamunā became To̲lunai[3]), acquired a specific significance typical of the South.

Our study cannot look at the general picture of cultural and religious interaction between North and South India, and will avoid touching upon the highly controversial (and political) issue of Dravidian versus Aryan cultural exchange. But even the one detail to be investigated here will make it abundantly clear that such an interaction was infinitely more complex than many writers

[1] *Akan.* 59, 3f : *vaṭāatu vaṇ puṉal To̲lunai vār maṇal akaṉ tu̲rai.*

[2] See section 3.711 below.

[3] This name can perhaps be connected with Tamil *to̲lu* 'cow-pen' and be compared with Sanskrit *vraja-* of a similar meaning.

naively assume.[4] For the whole period with which we are concerned, Southern culture was a mixed culture, in which 'Dravidian',[5] Tamil, Sanskrit-brahmin, Buddhist, Jain, and many other influences had merged and produced a composite whole which nevertheless possessed a distinctive flavour of its own when compared with the

[4] Primarily as a reaction against the exaggerated claim (usually made by brahmins) that it was Brahmanism which brought culture and religion to the South, the general trend among South Indian writers (usually non-brahmins) moved to the other extreme (and was politicised by the DMK and its antecedents). This trend tries to prove a Tamil or 'Dravidian' origin for factors which to the uninvolved observer are more likely to have originated in the North of India. Also Western scholars have not remained unaffected by this trend (recently Hart, 1975, has claimed that even Hāla's poetry is derived from Southern models; compare Norman, 1977, for a critique of this claim). On the basis of a questionable chronology (viz. *all* works in the *caṅkam corpus* are earlier than the third century AD.), the occurrence of any factor in this *corpus* is automatically taken as sufficient proof of its 'Dravidian' origin. For example, the word *ūl* ('that which is old' → 'established rule, usage', found in that meaning in *Puṟa.* 29, 22 and *Mal.* 263 : *ūl iṟantu* 'transgressing the established custom') which can indeed mean 'karma' (*Kuṟaḷ* 380; *Jīvakacintāmaṇi*; note : both works of Jain inspiration!), is interpreted as proof of a purely 'Dravidian' origin of the concepts of 'karma' and 'transmigration' (Chelliah, 1962, p. 286, *ad Mal.* 263, speaks somewhat more carefully of 'at least a glimpse of this belief'). Singaravelu (1966, pp. 161-67), mainly on the basis of the *Puṟa.*, indiscriminately labels every facet of religion found there as 'ancient Tamil', not acknowledging the possibility that some of the poems in that anthology could be as late as the sixth century AD or that the Jains must have adopted Tamil words to express their own religious notions by extending the original denotation of such words. A similar problem is encountered in connection with the figure of Māyōṉ. According to Thani Nayagam (1966, pp. 62f), Māyōṉ is nothing but the adaptation of the Tamil Murukaṉ to a pastoral environment and form of life (that is why his complexion is said to be dark-green!) 'The pastures were green and hence they gave the name of Maayoon to the god whom they had called Ceeyoon [the red one, *qua* rising sun, p. 59] in the mountains...' This is accepted by his pupil Singaravelu (1966, p. 104). Similarly Chelliah speaks of 'Mayon, the Dravidian god of the *mullai* region, who is identified with Aryan Vishnu' (1962, p. 11). Also Sadasivam (in Notes to Chelliah, 1962, p. 94) distinguishes an 'Aryan Vishnu' from a 'Tamil Mayon'. Even Zvelebil (1975b, p. 35) repeats this: 'identification of this ancient pre-Aryan Tamil deity with Viṣṇu and specifically with Kṛṣṇa'. As we shall try to show (below in 3.711), there is no evidence whatsoever to suggest that Māyōṉ is anything but Kṛṣṇa/Viṣṇu.

[5] I shall refrain from using the word 'Dravidian' here in any but a strictly linguistic sense. Given that *draviḍa/drāmiḍa* in Sanskrit denotes simply 'Tamil' and that in all matters other than linguistic ones it is practically impossible to decide what is Dravidian, what Tamil, and what Southern, it is best to avoid using a term so heavily loaded nowadays with political and social connotations.

Northern scene.[6] The label 'Southern' will be used here in this sense alone.[7]

Emotional Kṛṣṇa bhakti manifested itself in the South from about the seventh century onward, with Nammāḻvār and other Āḻvārs. Its various antecendents, however, can be traced much further back, through earlier Āḻvārs and the so-called *caṅkam* literature, to the first few centuries AD. Thus the most logical arrangement would have been to explore these various antecedents together in one section, and concentrate in the next section on those Āḻvārs who illustrate Kṛṣṇa emotionalism. But a number of difficulties which arise from the way in which our source material has come down to us make such an approach impracticable. The relevant documents belong to two monolithic blocks of material, two self-contained *corpora* of poetry: the *caṅkam* literature and the *Prabandham* of the Āḻvārs. While it is commonly, and rightly, assumed that the second *corpus* contains material which belongs to the second half of the first millennium AD, the *caṅkam corpus* must not therefore automatically belong to its previous half. Even the narrow range of material which can be discussed here will show that certain sources, although found in the *caṅkam corpus*, cannot be much earlier than the Āḻvārs. Since such questions are best discussed in a systematic manner, Part 3 is restricted to the *caṅkam* material, while the following Part 4 will analyse the *Prabandham in toto*. A certain chronological overlap which is thereby created will however produce but little confusion, since the character of the material, even when contemporary, is rather different. (On even later *caṅkam* material see Appendix X.).

3.1 Introduction

The question which interests us here is how, according to various

[6] Compare Zvelebil, 1973, pp. 1-3; 9-22.

[7] In geographical terms, this includes what is today Tamilnadu, Kerala, and the southern part of Andhra. The term 'Northern' refers on the one hand to aspects of culture and religion which belong to North India, i.e. the Upaniṣadic spirituality, Buddhism, Jainism, Sanskrit, Prakrit, and Apabhraṃsa; on the other hand, I have extended the term to include also, for example, the *Mahāpurāṇa* (in Apabhraṃśa) and the *Yaśastilaka* (in Sanskrit), although both works were written in the South, since as Jain works and for other reasons they belong to the Northern cultural and religious tradition.

caṅkam sources, the South knew of Kṛṣṇa and in which cultural and religious contexts this figure of Northern mythology appeared in the South. Although our choice of topics has primarily been guided by what will be important for the emotional bhakti of the Āḻvārs, it has not been possible to restrict our attention to this rather narrow area, since our understanding of Southern culture and religion during this period is still so limited that any evaluation of a particular facet necessitates a sometimes quite elaborate preparation. In particular, the social and chronological correlations of the different components which eventually combine as 'emotional bhakti' will require extensive investigation.

3.11 *Historical background*

The extreme South of India emerges into history around 300 BC, and various kinds of documents become available.[8] According to these sources, the area was divided among the three kingdoms of the Pāṇṭiyas, Cēras and Cōḻas, and this political division remained intact for some centuries. Separated from the Śātavāhanas and the Northern region in general by wild jungles inhabited by savage tribes,[9] these kingdoms developed along fairly independent lines, although the earliest Brāhmī inscriptions testify to the presence of Jains and Buddhists in the region. Accordingly, Prakrit loanwords in ancient Tamil antedate those from Sanskrit. Contact with other countries appears to have been intense: these ancient kingdoms entertained trade connections by sea *inter alia* with the Roman empire and with Han China.[10] One can speculate that

[8] On Tamil inscriptions in the Brāhmī alphabet see, for example, Zvelebil, 1970, pp. 11-16; Nilakanta Sastri, 1966, pp. 89-91; 1957, pp. 498ff. North Indian references in Sanskrit, etc., texts: Goetz, 1962, p. 51; Nilakanta Sastri, 1966, pp. 68-79; 85-8. On the remarks by Megasthenes, the ambassador of Seleucos at the court of Candragupta Maurya (*c.* 310 BC) see Nilakanta Sastri, 1939, pp. 41-3; Subrahmanian, 1966a, pp. 18f.

[9] See Goetz, 1962, p. 51; Krishnaswamy Aiyangar, 1941, vol. I, pp. 41, 44ff, 547; most recently Leshnik (1975, pp. 62ff) has discussed the pastoral nomads who occupied the belt between the 14th and 17th degrees of latitude, north of the ancient Tamilnadu. But contacts with the North were not altogether missing, as a bilingual (viz. Prakrit and Tamil) coin of the Śātavāhana king Vasiṣṭhiputra Śātakarṇi of about AD 170 shows. See Zvelebil, 1973, p. 39, with literature in notes 1f.

[10] These links with Rome and China are borne out by foreign records, coins, and archaeological finds in the South (see, for example, Subrahmanian, 1966a,

it was due to this flourishing trade that the highly sophisticated culture of 'secular' outlook which we find expressed in the contemporary literature developed there.[11] This period comes to an end by about the fourth century AD, a number of separate causes contributing to the downfall of the ancient Tamil kingdoms. Directly instrumental in this seem to have been the Kalabhras (Tamil: Kaḷappāḷar) who ruled the South till about AD 550.[12] But such an invasion was only possible because of a political vacuum created by other causes, viz. the decline of the Roman and the Han empires and the consequent decline of economic prosperity in South India.[13] This 'historical night' (Nilakanta Sastri) ended with the emergence of two strong Hindu empires: the revived Pāṇṭiya power, centred in Maturai, and, as a new factor in the political context of the South, the Pallavas whose capital was Kāñcīpuram.[14] From about AD 550 onwards, inscriptions appear in the Tamil, and not any more in the Prakrit or Sanskrit, language.[15] From roughly the same date onward, Jain (and Buddhist) religious and cultural influence is combated by a strong 'Hindu' revival, exemplified on the political level by the Pāṇṭiyas and Pallavas, and on the popular level by the Āḻvārs (and Śaivite Nāyaṉārs). This rather rapid and extensive religious transformation has been explained by the emigration of large groups of Northern intellectuals, religious leaders, artists, etc., to the South, following the collapse of the Gupta empire. The construction of temples in the South on a large scale from this date onward has also been connected with this immigration.[16]

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pp. 13-23; Embree/Wilhelm, 1967, pp. 152-5). Similarly the Śātavāhanas flourished during the same period through Roman trade.

11 Hāla's *Sattasaī* illustrates this for the Śātavāhanas.

12 On the sources about the Kalabhras see, for example, Sewell, 1932, p. 21; compare Nilakanta Sastri, 1966, pp. 144f; Subrahmanian, 1966a, p. 11; Goetz (1962, p. 52): *'... welche anscheinend durch den Rückzug der Āndhras vor den Skythen und anderen nordischen Barbaren in Bewegung gesetzt worden waren'*. Also Leshnik, 1975, may be considered in this context.

13 Compare Goetz, 1962, p. 52.

14 Compare Sewell, 1932, pp. 21f; 374; 377; Nilakanta Sastri, 1929, pp. 37-98; 1966, pp. 146-61.

15 According to Nilakanta Sastri (1966, p. 103), 'Pallava' documents were originally in Prakrit (between AD 275-350) and in Sanskrit (between AD 350-550). But after the defeat of the Kalabhras, when the Pallavas gain independence, Tamil is used; compare Zvelebil, 1964; 1970, pp. 16f.

16 Goetz, 1962, p. 75; p. 77: *'Zwischen dem späten 5. und dem 7. Jh. wurden zahl-*

3.12 *The caṅkam corpus*

An extensive *corpus* of poetry is available which, roughly speaking, covers the whole period mentioned above. The scope of the present study does not allow us to enter into a discussion of the 'mythology' that has evolved during the last few decades concerning this *corpus*, *caṅkam* literature.[17] A critical study even of such a limited amount of *caṅkam* material as the references to Kṛṣṇa in it indicates very convincingly that we are dealing with material which belongs to different strata of poetic culture and to a chronological range far wider than the first few centuries AD. Thus I have found it appropriate to follow Zvelebil and others[18] in extending the period covered by the *caṅkam corpus* up to the sixth century AD (except for a few later works),[19] and I have distinguished a 'classical' from a 'renaissance' period of *caṅkam* poetry.[20] The following Table

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lose śivaitische [*viṣṇuitische* ought to have been added here] *Tempel erbaut, meist in ganzen Gruppen, größeren Kolonien von Brahmanen Beschäftigung und Unterhalt gebend'.*

[17] After the impressive and sober contributions of scholars like Cuvāmināṭaiyar and Vaiyāpuri Piḷḷai, the discussion of *caṅkam* poetry has now declined to the level of myth-making; compare Zvelebil, 1975, pp. 45f, 55-61. The name *'caṅkam'* itself has given rise to many controversies, compare Zvelebil, 1973, pp. 45-9; 1975, pp. 55-61. For all we know the writers who first mention such an institution (from the 7th or 8th century AD. onward) may have been referring to a relatively *recent* phenomenon, which saw itself as the heir to the ancient literary tradition and quite naturally projected its own *institutional* nature back into the ancient past. Among the authors who maintain that the *whole* of the poetic *corpus* styled 'caṅkam' belongs to a period prior to the third century AD. may be mentioned Subrahmanian, 1966a, pp. 11f, 21 and the theory underlying his *Index of Pre-Pallava names* (1966b).

[18] See Vaiyāpuri Piḷḷai, 1956; Zvelebil, 1973; 1974; 1975a.

[19] See below Appendix X for some examples of later fragments.

[20] One of the strongest arguments in favour of the conventional chronology (viz. *caṅkam* = pre-Pallava) has been that the *corpus* does not seem to refer to the Pallavas. Nevertheless, it seems possible to tackle this difficulty from a variety of angles. The area where the Pallavas founded their empire must have been marginal to the homeland of *caṅkam* culture. At a later period, the Tamil renaissance (represented by the *Kalittokai*, but compare also the *Paripāṭal*) appears to be linked with Maturai. Even if the word 'Pallava' itself does not occur in the *corpus*, this may not imply that they were not known by a different name. We have an inscription by Mahendravarman (sixth/seventh century) from Taḷavāṉūr (see Zvelebil, 1970, p. 18) which speaks of *toṇṭaiy an tār ventaṉ* 'the king (wearing) a beautiful garland of *toṇṭai* flowers'. Even when one cannot agree fully with Nilakanta Sastri (1966, p. 101) who seems to postulate a *linguistic* correspondence between the Skt. *pallava* and Tamil *toṇṭai*, this suggests at least an association of the Pallavas with the *toṇṭai*

V21 may illustrate the tentative dates for various *caṅkam* works which will be mentioned below.

Table V

Earliest poets in the anthologies:		
Aiṅkuṟunūṟu	(*Aiṅk.*)	
Kuṟuntokai	(*Kuṟu.*)	1st century BC
Naṟṟiṇai	(*Naṟ.*)	to
Puṟanāṉūṟu	(*Puṟa.*)	2nd century AD
Akanāṉūṟu	(*Akan.*)	
Earliest songs in the Pattuppāṭṭu:		
Porunarārṟuppaṭai	(*Poru.*)	
Perum-Pāṇārṟuppaṭai	(*Perump.*)	2nd to 3rd century
Paṭṭiṉappālai	(*Paṭ.*)	
Kuṟiñcippāṭṭu	(*Kuṟi.*)	
Middle strata in the anthologies; new songs in the Pattuppāṭṭu:		
Malaipaṭukatām	(*Mal.*)	
Maturaikkāñci[22]	(*Mat.*)	2nd to 4th century
Neṭunalvāṭai[23]	(*Neṭ.*)	
Later strata; new songs in the Pattuppāṭṭu:		
Mullaippāṭṭu	(*Mul.*)	3rd to 5th century
Ciṟu-Pāṇārṟuppaṭai	(*Ciṟup.*)	

Latest strata in the anthologies: 4th to 6th century
Tolkāppiyam (*Tolk.*) Book III (Poruḷatikāram): 5th century[24]
Final version of the epic *Cilappatikāram* (*Cila.*): 5th or 6th century.[25]
Kalittokai (*Kali.*)[26] and *Paripāṭal* (*Pari.*)[27]: 5th to 7th century
Tirumurukārṟuppaṭai[28]: 7th to 9th century.

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flower. An early poem, the *Perump.* which is practically the only classical *caṅkam* work to describe Kāñcīpuram, refers to a king or chieftain as 'toṇṭai-māṉ' and as 'lord of the toṇṭaiyar'. This suggests, if not dynastic continuity, at least survival of a particular symbolism. In *Paṭ.* (line 276) we hear of 'vaṭavar' (northerners); this might well refer to any of the tribes or chieftains in the area of Kāñcīpuram, since even in the *Prabandham* 'vaṭa' (North) is associated with that region. (The *corpus* contains further references to *toṇṭai-māṉ/yar* and *vaṭavar* which can be found without difficulty in Subrahmanian 1966b, in the *Index des Mots*, or in Vaiyāpuri Piḷḷai's *Caṅka Ilakkiyam* pp. 1475 and 1482.) Thus there appear various possibilities of avoiding the conclusion that the whole *corpus* must be pre-Pallava simply because the Pallavas as such are not mentioned in it.

In view of the far-reaching political, cultural, and social transformations which took place in the South during this period, it is not surprising to find that also the literature in many ways reflects these transformations and that behind the homogeneous label 'caṅkam' a considerable variety of poetic expressions emerges.[29]

A particularly important implication of this chronological sequence concerns the *Tolkāppiyam*. As it is being placed in such a late period, at least Book III (which contains the poetic rules) must be interpreted as the *reflection* and *codification* of the literary practice of earlier poetry, and cannot be regarded as the *norm* according to which even the oldest poetry was composed.[30]

Thus we cannot assume that certain poetic symbols always had, or had exclusively, the significance which is attributed to them by the *Tolkāppiyam* III. This may be illustrated here by one example. According to the poetic theory itself, 'cowherd' would be nothing but a poetic symbol (not unlike Occidental 'pastoral poetry'). But four other interpretations are possible, three of which will in fact be important for our interpretation of Southern Kṛṣṇaism.[31]

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[21] When not otherwise mentioned, the information concerning the tentative dates of these works is derived from Zvelebil, 1973, pp. 41-3. Compare also the same 1975, pp. 78f, 100–07.

[22] Zvelebil, 1973, p. 61.

[23] Ibid., p. 27, note 1.

[24] Ibid., pp. 145-7.

[25] Ibid., pp. 175, 179.

[26] Ibid., p. 120.

[27] Such a date seems suggested by Zvelebil (1973, p. 124: 'it seems to be separated at least by three centuries from the earlier collections') and indirectly also Gros (1968, pp. xvii-xxvi.)

[28] Zvelebil, 1973, pp. 27 note 1; 130; but see 1975, p. 106 with note 122.

[29] Thus also here (compare above 2.13 and 2.6) the development of Kṛṣṇaite literature was by no means monolinear. For example, when we find that material belonging to the *Kṛṣṇa-carita* becomes more abundant in the course of time, this need not be solely due to an increase of Sanskritic material from the North. The type of literature which documents this abundant material strongly suggests that popular strata of society have become a topic, if not creators, of this poetry only during a relatively late period, and thus the Kṛṣṇaism found here may well belong to a much older period (which is not documented). See below pp.181f.

[30] Compare Zvelebil, 1973, p. 96, where it has been suggested that two landscapes (*tiṇais*) are more original to *caṅkam* poetry than the three later ones *marutam*, *neytal*, and *mullai*. On further implications see below pp. 158f.

[31] See section 3.5 below.

These 'cowherds' may have been a *real* tribe, a contemporary social group (similar to the Ābhīras in the North); they may symbolize, in a poetical frame, the *mythical* figures of the *Kṛṣṇa-carita*; they may appear as figures in an *epical* context; and Thani Nayagam fancifully assumes that they represent an *earlier stage in the historical development* of the Tamil people.[32] But it would be equally absurd to treat the poems simply as anthropological 'field notes';[33] they are clearly coded to a high degree according to various conventions and levels of significance, and their content will have to be unpacked.

3.13 *Arrangement*

The sources which deal with Kṛṣṇa[34] have been arranged in four[35] separate groups; I shall however begin the analysis of the material by exploring two facets of classical *caṅkam* culture, religion and poetry, which will serve as a general frame of reference when analysing the allusions to Kṛṣṇa. Early Southern religion differs markedly from the normative ideology and is characterized by a pronounced 'earthliness' which includes aspects of ecstatic religion. Southern poetic culture is important in our context because here a firm link is established between poetic symbols and emotive responses. Turning to the references to Kṛṣṇa, the first group contains material which is assumed to belong to the earliest period (viz. up to the fourth century AD), called here the 'classical *caṅkam*'.

[32] See towards the end of note 4 above.

[33] Such an approach is taken by Singaravelu (1966, p. 196). *Kuṟu.* 40 reads: 'Our hearts, full of love, joined together on their own account, like rain that has fallen on red soil...' The mystery of love does not seem to have any obvious causes, and therefore the question is added: 'My mother and your mother—what relationship would they have?' This highly imaginative poem now serves for Singaravelu as evidence for the ancient kinship patterns of the Tamils!

[34] The *Index des Mots*, ss. vv. *Māyavaṉ*, *Māyōṉ*, and *Māl*, mentions a few more references than are discussed here; these do not add anything to our understanding of Kṛṣṇaism in the South. The works mentioning Kṛṣṇa are on the whole Jain, and refer to him merely in poetic comparisons. For example *Tiṇaimālai-nūṟṟaimpatu* 58, lines 1f, compares the colour of the ocean to that of Kṛṣṇa's complexion, and even *Nālaṭiyar* 373, lines 1f, which says 'Māl with red eyes who is worshipped by the gods in the heaven of lovely expansion' (*aṅ kaṇ vicumpiṉ amarar toḻa ppaṭuñ ceṅ kaṇ Māl*) uses this only in a comparison.

[35] A fifth group contains even later material; this has been discussed in Appendix X.

Already at this early stage it is possible to locate the figure of Kṛṣṇa in three different milieux: connected with the king, in folk religion, and in love poetry. The second group consists of somewhat later sources (about fifth century AD). Here a specific emotive function of Kṛṣṇa in poetry is established as the norm; he is associated with the emotion of 'separation' and with the set of poetic symbols styled 'lanscape of jasmine'. The third group contains documents of the same or slightly later date which reflect folk culture and its treatment of the Kṛṣṇa figure. This material is labelled here as belonging to the 'Tamil renaissance'. In it we find interesting variants of Kṛṣṇa myths, an earthliness typical of old Tamil religion, but no connection of Kṛṣṇa with 'separation'. The fourth group of references is derived from the collection *Paripāṭal* (possibly slightly later than the previous group). This work offers us insights into another milieu, that of the Viṣṇu temple. In contradistinction to our previous material, we encounter here a definite awareness of a *transcendental* absolute (who is worshipped in the temple where he has manifested himself). But we do not find here the emotive correlation of Kṛṣṇa and separation which the poeticians had established, nor the earthliness so typical of the Tamil renaissance works.

Ignoring the social and chronological variations, we can postulate the following factors: ecstatic religion without reference to Kṛṣṇa, a literary norm which associates Kṛṣṇa with separation and a particular landscape, earthy folk literature which knows of Kṛṣṇa as the hero of specifically Southern myths, and the temple cult which worships him as the manifest transcendental god. It is the Āḻvārs who will bring these disconnected strands together.

3.2 Religion and poetry in the classical caṅkam period

Zvelebil has characterized the spirit of ancient Tamil culture in the following manner:

> The ideal of human life was to be achieved in this life; and it was the ideal of a wise man of human proportions and with human qualities. There is even a specific term for this ideal man . . . *cāṉṟōṉ* . . . means 'a complete, a whole man, a perfect, noble man'.[36]

[36] Zvelebil, 1973, p. 17.

He continues:

> The important fact is that this Tamil wise man, the *cānṟōn*, is not an anchorite or a recluse, not an ascetic of any kind and shade, but a man of flesh and blood who would live fully his days of courtship and married life, of fighting and love-making. . . .[37]

Such a 'humanistic' ideal would suggest that religion did not play a very important rôle in that society. The structure of poetry which was created in that civilization seems to corroborate that assumption. For the subject matter of poetry is formally divided into two clearly distinct categories: *puṟam* 'outside' and *akam* 'inside'. *Akam* deals with the most 'intimate' sphere of the human person, with his emotions, his passions, longings — his love; *puṟam* concerns external affairs like war, politics, trade, social matters, and, as a minor element, religion. Compared with the spirituality of the *Upaniṣads*, in which the *ātman* is the most 'intimate' centre of the person, the attitude displayed in *caṅkam* lyrics could indeed be styled 'secular'. Zvelebil would thus seem to be correct in saying that 'the early poetry of the Tamils is founded on a *secular*, *oral bardic* tradition'[38], a statement which he amplifies:

> The Tamil classical poetry is pre-eminently of this world; it makes almost no allusions to supernatural meddling in worldly affairs. When, quite marginally and exceptionally, it reflects some kind of *religio*, it is mostly the rites and ceremonies connected with the daily life of people (such as marriage ceremonies), or, in bardic war-poetry, reflections of tribal cults and their survival (sacrifice of blood and flesh to the devils [sic!], etc.).[39]

This last passage, taken as it stands, would suggest that Tamil culture had advanced to a sophisticated stage of 'secular humanism' with religion no more than an archaic superstitious remnant. Equally marginal to that society was, according to the same author, another form of religion: 'The presence of Vedic religion, of Brahmanism, in early Tamil poetry may be traced only with difficulty as a very feeble, unimportant superstratum.'[40] But the situation

[37] Ibid., p. 18.
[38] Ibid., p. 20.
[39] Ibid., pp. 20f.
[40] Ibid., p. 21.

in ancient Tamilnadu appears to have been far more complex than what these remarks suggest. The crucial question that has to be asked is: how precisely does the '*cāṉṟōṉ* ideal (or ideology)' relate to ancient Tamil society at large? Can we really assume that it applied to it as a whole? If this were the case, the infiltration of Kṛṣṇaite material into the South would then have taken place at a relatively late date and could be described simply as the encounter of a secular humanistic civilization with Kṛṣṇa myths and religion. Kailasapathy has, however, provided some useful insights into this problem (insights which also Zvelebil has adopted in another place[41]). He speaks of a society 'divided basically into two classes',[42] that of the heroes (to be sung about in poetry) and that of the non-heroes: 'The division and all that it connotes is epitomized in the two words *cāṉṟōr* and *iḷiciṉar* [uncivilized persons]. . . .[43] While the hero, on account of his family position, can dedicate his full attention to the 'noble pursuits' of 'fighting' and 'heroic exploits', and to 'his chief pastimes, feasting, hunting, and games',[44] 'the lower people were engaged in manual labour — the everyday work of getting a livelihood'.[45] With reference to the extant poetic *corpus*, Kailasapathy remarks:

> It is necessary at the outset to emphasize that a detailed picture of the lower classes is difficult to obtain, because of the insufficient data pertaining to them. The reason for the paucity of references is not hard to see. As in heroic poetry elsewhere, the interest of heroic stories being focused on members of princely families, the bulk of the populace is virtually ignored. At best the non-aristocratic personnel appear on the fringe.[46]

This clearly suggests that classical *caṅkam* poetry is 'class literature', and that the ideal of the *cāṉṟōṉ*, far from being cherished by the whole society, forms no more than a kind of superstructure to ancient Tamil civilization. The material which will be analysed in the following chapter bears out the assumption that even during the 'age of the heroes' religion was much more than just a 'survival of tribal cults', and also that Kṛṣṇa was not altogether unknown to

41 Ibid., p. 15.
42 Kailasapathy, 1968, p. 258.
43 Ibid., p. 259.
44 Ibid., p. 260.
45 Ibid., p. 261.
46 Ibid.

both heroes and *iḷiciṉar*.[47] This means, that *at least* two separate factors will have to be taken into account when studying the Southern adaptation of Kṛṣṇaite material, viz. the religion of the *iḷiciṉar* and the ideology of the 'heroes'.

3.21 *Religion in ancient Tamil society*[48]

3.211 *Terms for the 'divine'*

One of the essential elements in most definitions of 'religion' is the awareness of the 'supernatural' or the 'divine'. Are there any terms in the old texts which indicate such an awareness? *Kaṭavuḷ* is the first term to come to mind; certainly in medieval times it denoted 'God who transcends speech and mind.'[49] But such a

[47] See section 3.5 below, where the distinction hero: commoner becomes particularly relevant.

[48] There exists a number of attempts to delineate the religion of the classical *caṅkam* age, but I have not found any of them particularly useful or reliable for the present purposes. As a rule, the *whole corpus* of poetry is taken indiscriminately as source material, without regard to any social, chronological, or ideological differences. They lack a systematic approach, following the commentators in their definition of crucial Tamil terms, and often project quite uncritically fashionable schools of thought upon this quite different material. Thus Thani Nayagam applies something like Schmidt's *Urmonotheismus* to the *corpus*; Singaravelu is highly influenced by Durkheim and Tylor, and therefore projects *both* Totemism *and* Animism on to the sources. Hart, employing an Eliadian approach, imagines everything to be pervaded by 'sacred power', and seems to leave no space for the secular altogether (see Hart, 1975, particularly pp. 31-40, 81-137; compare Norman, 1977, and Zvelebil, 1977, for a critique of this highly idiosyncratic work). Among other studies of *caṅkam* religion may be mentioned: S.A. Mutaliyar, 'Concepts of religion in *caṅkam* literature...', in: *Tamil Culture*, vol. 11, pp. 252-72; K. K. Pillay, *A Social History of the Tamils*, part I, Madras, 1969, pp. 473-548; M. Arokiaswami, *The Classical Age of the Tamils*, Madras, 1967, pp. 97-104. A critical and comprehensive monograph on *caṅkam* religion is an urgent *desideratum*.

The following pages are no more than a selective, and to some extent, impressionistic survey of features which appear to me to be important in the context of Āḻvār religion. In order to avoid the difficulties of the various chronological layers in works like the *Puṟanāṉūṟu*, I shall on the whole restrict myself to the older songs in the *Pattuppāṭṭu*. This has the additional advantage of dealing with relatively 'realistic' material; these long songs provide detailed descriptions of the country, its different peoples and their different customs, and although the general context is one of flattery, these descriptions may not be too far removed from the contemporary reality.

[49] Thus the MTL (referring to the old dictionary *Piṅ.*).

translation bears the clear mark of a late, philosophical system of categories, and looking at the early texts, this rendering seems hardly applicable. 'Supernatural' or 'divine' may be taken to be the most archaic meaning,[50] and for the substantive, 'supernatural being'.[51] Jain and Buddhist interpretations appear to be secondary.[52] Sanskrit *divya-* and *deva-* would then be the closest parallels to the primary meaning of the Tamil word.

A second word, *aṇaṅku*, may be mentioned here. As a verb, it denotes 'to suffer, be distressed; to die', and also for the noun, related meanings occur: 'affliction, suffering; fear; killing'. Thus the word denotes a particular psychological state of stress, and this can be connected with the ancient Tamil idea that extreme psychological symptoms indicate, or better, are caused by, 'possession'. The Jains and Buddhists were bound to reinterpret this conception, and thus we find 'demoness that takes away life by arousing lust, etc.'[53] But for the classical *caṅkam* texts, such a moralistic notion appears alien.[54] It is in a particular context that the psychological state of stress and the possession by a deity are combined, viz. in the religious dance of possession by Murukaṉ. Thus we hear: '. . . the threshing-ground on which [girls dance] who experience the possession by Neṭuvēḷ (= Murukaṉ) . . .'[55] Thus while *kaṭavuḷ* seems to occur as the 'deity to be worshipped',

[50] In a number of compounds (all taken from the MTL), the first element *kaṭavuḷ* simply specifies the following element as something supernatural, divine, celestial. Thus we find: *kaṇikai* 'dancing girl of the celestial world', *tī* 'submarine fire', *paṇi* 'celestial snake' (Ananta), *maṇi* 'celestial gem', *nati* 'celestial river' (Ganges), *āḷar* 'divine rulers' (gods).

[51] By itself, the word *kaṭavuḷ* occurs frequently in the *Pattuppāṭṭu*, originally it seems in a generic function; the commentators specify the actual god referred to variously. In *Perump.* 391 it is said to be Nārāyaṇa, in *Mal.* 396 Murukaṉ, in 230 and 538 Śiva, and for *Mat.* 467 it is supposed to refer to the Buddha.

[52] According to the MTL, for example, the *Jīvakacintāmaṇi* (Jain) uses the word ' in the sense of 'goodness', and the *Maṇimēkalai* (Buddhist), of 'divine nature.'

[53] According to the MTL: *Kuṟaḷ* 918; *Maṇimēkalai* VI, 135. Later works, like the *Piṅ.* or *Tivā.*, continue this by rendering it 'celestial girl' or 'girl as beautiful as a celestial damsel'. Similarly the commentator *ad Perump.* 459 paraphrases it as 'demoness', although the original meaning there is more likely 'possession'. The same fluctuation in meaning between 'agitation (caused by possession)' and 'possessing spirit' occurs *ad Paṭ.* 87.

[54] For further details see below, sections 3.214 and *ad* TVM IV, 6.

[55] *Kuṟi.* 174f: *Neṭuvēḷ aṇaṅk' uṟu makaḷir āṭu kaḷam.* Also in TVM IV, 6, 5 we find this meaning: *aṇaṅk' āṭu* 'to dance in possession'.

aṇaṅku appears as the divine which can possess a person in emotional agitation and which can be summoned to take possession by ecstatic dances. More will be said below about this aspect of ancient *caṅkam* religion.[56]

3.212 *Murukaṉ*

It can be observed from the above examples that terms like *aṇaṅku* or *kaṭavuḷ* appear to be generic, denoting a category and not an individual. This made it possible for the Tamils, once exposed to Northern influence, to put Northern gods in these categories. But the early sources also suggest that the classical *caṅkam* period was aware of a more specific, individual, or 'personalized' manifestation of those categories. This is Murukaṉ.[57] Particularly in the older texts, the names of the 'god' are in fact abstract nouns, generic terms: *muruku*: youth (*Tivā*), beauty (*Piṅ.*), *cēy/cēey*: youth (*Tivā.*),[58] greatness (*Jīvaka.*). Similarly in periphrastic titles: *cevvēḷ*: the great, beautiful, good hero;[59] *neṭuvēḷ*: the great, exalted hero. The name by which the god is now best known, 'Murukaṉ', is nothing but a personal noun derived from *muruku*: 'he who possesses youth, beauty'. The overlapping meanings of the abstract nouns *muruku*, *cēy*, *cemmai*, and *neṭu* are not reducible to an 'original' notion underlying the god; in fact, we are dealing with

[56] Besides *kaṭavuḷ* and *aṇaṅku*, other words occurring already in early sources are treated by the commentators as denoting a transcendental being. *Naṭu* is said by the MTL to mean 'God as immanent being', and Gros *ad Pari.* II, 25 (p. 174), adopting the meaning, explains: '*Il s'agit de l'une des formes les plus hautes de Dieu, l'Antaryāmin, immanente à toutes les créatures...*' For all we know, such a late and speculative text as the *Pari.* may have used the word with these connotations; but the literal meaning remains clear, viz. 'centre, middle; essence'. Even in *Pari.* II, 24f this sense is the only one necessary: '...and becoming the "essence" of revelation (=*śruti*) ... which is investigated by the "exalted ones" (=brahmins)' (*uyarntōr āynta kēḷviyu ṇaṭuv ākutalum*). Another word is *iṟaivaṉ*; the MTL distinguishes two words unnecessarily: (1) 'God, the all-abiding', and (2) 'chief, master, superior' (and adds here again: 'Supreme God'). The further meanings listed under (2) make it clear that literally the word means nothing more than 'person worthy of respect'. *Vēḷ*, which occurs in names like *Kāmavēḷ*, *Murukavēḷ*, *Cevvēḷ*, means nothing more than 'great person' (and not 'God').

[57] Gros, pp. xxxviii-xlviii provides a reliable summary of many features of Murukaṉ as found in the *caṅkam corpus*, including the period in which he had become amalgamated with Skanda. It is therefore unnecessary to repeat those details here.

[58] And still in PTM III, 10, 6: 'son, child'.

[59] Deriving it from *cem-mai*.

an interrelated semantic field 'youth — beauty — love — vigour — heroism — greatness'.[60] It depends on the contexts in which Murukan is referred to, which of these interrelated concepts are stressed. For example, 'the illustrious person radiant with the beauty and the anger of Murukan . . .'[61] or 'heroic strength like (that of) Neṭuvēḷ. . .'[62]

It may also be noted that this semantic field of Murukan's names corresponds very closely to the ideal of the *cānrōn*: as the 'perfect man' to enjoy the fulness of life, proving his heroism in battle and his attractiveness in love affairs. Time and again in the following pages reference will be made to Murukan, and it is no exaggeration to speak of him as the Tamil 'god' *par excellence*, in whom the Tamils of the classical *caṅkam* age envisaged the divine in a personalized form, and who at the same time represented their human ideals on a divine plane.[63] Thus it would not seem to be correct to label *caṅkam* society 'secular': awareness of supernatural forces may have been more typical of the common people, while the *cānrōr* would add a humanistic accent to those forces, but a certain interpenetration (particularly in the figure of Murukan) can be detected.

3.213 *Abodes of the divine*

Talk of the 'divine' or 'supernatural' can be justified only because

[60] Usually in the interpretation of the god's name, undue stress is given to a name Ceyyōn 'the red one'. This name occurs only *once* in the older poetry, in *Pura*. 56, 8; but in this poem we hear in line 2 of '(Śiva) with the sapphire (-coloured) throat', in lines 3-4 of 'Baladeva with conch-like (white) body', and in lines 5-6 of '(Viṣṇu) with the sapphire (-coloured) body'. I think that just to contrast colours, the poet 'invented' the word *ceyyōn*, presumably deriving it by 'popular etymology' from names like *cevvēḷ*. Once Māyōn (=Kṛṣṇa 'the dark one') had become well-known, it was obviously tempting to continue using this play on the colours, contrasting Murukan as the 'red one' with Māyōn 'the dark one'. See, for example, *Kali*. 104, 7-14, where four bulls of different colours are compared to the same four gods as in *Pura*. 56, the black one to Kṛṣṇa, and the red one to Vēl-vallan, 'the hero skilled with the spear', viz. Murukan. But it should be kept in mind that Māyōn originally means the 'dark one', while Murukan became known as the 'red one' only artificially.

[61] *Poru*. 131: *Murukan cīrratt' uru keḻu kuricil*.

[62] *Perump*. 75: *Neṭuvēḷ anna mīḷi*.

[63] The *corpus* contains at least seventy references to Murukan. The goddess Korravai, said to be his mother, is referred to only about three times in the early texts (*Perump*. 459; *Neṭ*. 168; *Cila*. XII); two further references are found in *Pari*.

the term 'secular' has been brought into the discussion. In my opinion, a clear conception of 'transcendence' has not evolved in these early sources, so that a clear-cut polarity 'sacred' — 'profane' is not applicable. This becomes more apparent when we look at the way in which the 'divine' was seen as manifest, present, and available within the confines of empirical reality, localized in various particular areas and symbols. The following few examples may illustrate this localized conception of the supernatural.

Whatever the precise conception of a life after death may have been, the survival of a hero's name and fame on account of his exploits was of particular concern. Special 'stones' (*kal*) were put up, possibly inscribed with the hero's name, through which the fame of dead warriors became 'unending':

> . . . stones erected with the name of unending good fame of warriors who have given rise to an excellent lineage. . . .[64]

> . . . .a fence of [memorial] stones erected with shields [resting on them] arranged in a row, and lances firmly planted [next to them]. . . .[65]

Even if the values for which these heroes are famed are 'secular', one will hardly deny a 'religious' implication in these customs.[66]

This 'religious' dimension is further stressed by the association of such stones with trees or forests in which Murukaṉ dwells:

> . . . the forest, exalted [because of] the god in the *marā* tree of fine stem, in which the names [of heroes] — for people to know — had been written in stones that had been 'sculptured' . . .[67]

XI, 100 and *Kali.* 89, 8. Māyōṉ is mentioned only about ten times in the early sources.

[64] *Mal.* 387-9: *nal vaḻi kkoṭutta . . maṟavar/cellā nall icai ppeyaroṭu naṭṭa/kal.* The commentator specifies '...erected, after their names of unending good fame had been written on them...'

[65] *Paṭ.* 78f : *kiṭuku niraittu eṅk' ūṉṟi/naṭu kalliṉ araṇ.* The description serves as a comparison for the thatched huts in a coastal village near Pukār, against which poles with fish-hooks are placed.

[66] An elaborate study of the conception of 'fame' and the custom of setting up hero-stones has been made by Kailasapathy (1968, pp. 231-7), where many more references can be found.

[67] *Mal.* 394-6: *peyar . . aṟimār/kall eṟiṉ' eḻutiya nall arai marāatta/kaṭavuḷ ōṅkiya kāṭu. Marā = maravam,* Seaside Indian oak, *cadamba*; the god may be Murukaṉ.

There are many other instances of the idea that Murukaṉ lives in trees, particularly the *kaṭampu* tree, e.g.: '. . . Neṭuvēḷ who lives in the *kaṭampu*'.[68]

A related area of 'divine' presence is the *kaḷam* (or *maṉram*), the threshing-ground and place of meeting in a village, which is surrounded by such trees, or has one in its centre: '. . . the broad *kaḷam* where offerings are found under the lofty branches of the *marutu* tree in which snakes live. . .'[69] We also hear, with reference to a coastal village, of the 'powerful divine being that constructed its house by setting up the jaw-bone of the sword-fish'.[70]

Mountains and hills too are Murukaṉ's abode: 'the god high up on the hills'[71] or 'the god on the mountain slopes where black pepper grows'.[72]

It is not my aim to provide a list of all the various places and objects associated with the 'divine'; what is important here is that the 'divine' was conceived of as something that could be met with in this world. Of this I give two more examples. Walking through the mountain region, a poet is expected to hear 'the sweet music . . . which resounds clearly whenever the *celestial girls*, who are enjoying themselves in the waterfall, . . . plunge into the water.'[73] But it is not only entrancing nature that manifests the 'divine' or 'supernatural', just as *akam* was not the sole occupation of the poets and their patrons. The gruesome battlefield too is a *locale* for the supernatural:

> the headless trunks, holding hands, rise up and dance to the rhythm of the *tuṇaṅkai* dance that resounds with the clamour of the crowds of demon girls who drip fat from their mouths.[74]

[68] *Perump.* 75: *kaṭamp' amar Neṭuvēḷ.* In later texts, a name of the god is derived from this: *kaṭampaṉ* 'He in the *kaṭampu*' (*Tirumuruk.*, appended *veṇpā* No. 8). *Pari.* VIII, 126 speaks of *kaṭamp' amar celvaṉ* 'the lord residing in the *kaṭampu*'.

[69] *Perump.* 232f: *pāmp' uṟai marutiṉ ōṅku ciṉai nīlaṟ/pali peṟu viyaṉ kaḷam.* Note the word *bali* which is a Sanskrit loanword, 'offering'.

[70] *Paṭ.* 86f: *cuṟaviṉ kōṭu naṭṭu/maṉai ccērttiya vall aṇaṅku.* One could also translate: 'for whom an abode was constructed by . .'

[71] *Kuṟi.* 207f: *malai mī micai kaṭavuḷ.*

[72] *Aiṅk.* 243, 1: *kaṟi vaḷar cilampiṟ kaṭavuṭ.*

[73] *Mal.* 294-6: *aruvi nukarum vāṉara makaḷir/. . kuṭci toṟum/teriy imiḻ koṇṭa iṉṉ icai.*

[74] *Mat.* 25-7: *niṇam vāy ppeyta pēy makaḷir/iṇaiy oily imiḻ tuṇaṅkai ccīr/ppiṇai yūpam eḻunt' āṭa. Piṇai* according to the MTL *ad locum* means 'crowded; but *ad Mat.* 614 it gives 'to clasp each other's hands, as in dancing', which clearly is more

The situation becomes more complicated when we hear of much more sophisticated and elaborate forms of divine presence, denoted particularly by *kōyil* and *nakar*. Certainly in later language these words mean 'temple', and when they occur in the old *caṅkam* texts the commentators paraphrase them in that sense. But it is very doubtful whether it is legitimate to assume this meaning for the words in the old *caṅkam* works. Etymologically, *kōyil* originally meant 'house of the chief', and I have not found *kō* in the sense of 'god' in the old sources. If *nakar*-Skt. *nagara*, the original meaning would be 'town', and only at a period when the whole conception of 'town' had changed would it have been possible for the word to denote the geographical and spiritual centre of the town, the 'temple'. Many contexts in which the words occur are neutral, e.g. 'the white "palace" with pictures of distinguished workmanship'.[75] Other passages would suggest the meaning 'town'; for example, 'the fierce town, difficult to enter (since) guarded by demons'.[76] But there are other terms which seem to point to a more archaic and more typically Tamil form of 'temple', viz. *kantu* and *potiyil*. We may look at a fairly elaborate passage here, *Paṭ*. 246-9:

> . . . the public hall with the *pillar*, where the wayfarers [used to] rest, and where captive girls, after plunging into the fresh-water tank, would kindle the 'perpetual' lamp at twilight, and where many [people] would cross over the ground prepared with cowdung, and beautified with flowers would worship.[77]

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appropriate here. *Pēy* may be the Prakrit loanword *peya*-, from Skt. *preta*-, in which case these *pēy* girls would be a very early example of mythological borrowing from the North. Compare 4.21, note 18.

[75] *Paṭ*. 49f: *vēṟu paṭṭa viṉaiy ōvattu/veṇ kōyil*.

[76] *Paṭ*. 57: *pūtaṅ kākkum pukal aruṅ kaṭi nakar*. Note the Sanskrit loanword *pūtam*, from *bhūta*- 'demon'.

[77] *Koṇṭi makaḷir uṇ ṭuṟai mūlki/anti māṭṭiya nantā viḷakkiṉ/malar aṇi meḻukkam ēṟi ppalar toḻa/vampalar cēkkum kant' uṭai ppotiyil*. There are a number of difficult words here. (a) *koṇṭi* 'tribute, plunder, booty' (*Puṟa*. 51; 78); thus the MTL *ad locum* appears to be correct: 'captive woman' (for *koṇṭi makaḷir*). The meaning 'prostitute' would seem to reflect the value-system or institution of a later age (given *ad Naṟ*. 174 and *Maṇimē*. 18, 109).

(b) *uṇ* 'to drink'—*tuṟai* 'bathing place, ghat'; *ad Aiṅk*. 28, the MTL gives 'well', but here presumably something like an artificial pond, a 'temple tank' is meant.

(c) *nantā viḷakku:* the MTL gives *ad Cīvaka*. 3144 'perpetual lamp kept in the inner sanctum'; this seems meant here, although it is not necessary to associate it with the elaborate temple complex of a later date.

Given the linguistic difficulties of the passage, it may nevertheless be legitimate to infer that a somewhat institutionalized form of worship existed in the old period, involving a special building, the *potiyil* 'public hall' (at the same time used for 'secular' purposes, such as accommodating travellers) and a symbolic representation of the divine, the *kantu*; moreover that 'captive girls' were in charge of kindling a lamp at the *kantu* in the evening. Thus we may well be dealing here with a prototype of the later 'temple' which can be related without difficulty to other forms of 'divine presence' and to the general conception of the divine being present in this world.

3.214 *Worship*

We may now turn to the question of worship. Since the 'divine' was conceived of as something 'close by' and as integrated into the confines of concrete reality, it could be responded to in a simple and direct manner. Nature itself, in the form of various *omina* and *oracles*, could communicate with man,[78] or man could for particular purposes call upon a special medium, the *vēlaṉ*, 'he who [holds] the spear'; he was a kind of soothsayer or shaman, who by getting possessed by Murukaṉ could divine the cause of various diseases, when he had entered into a trance induced by a frenzied dance and had consulted the *kaḻaṅku* oracle. In *akam* poems, a particular genre developed in which the *vēlaṉ* is called to cure the sickness of a girl which in reality only her lover can cure. For example:

'My friend! When my mother, on account of my "illness", arranges for the *vēlaṉ* to come, will that *vēlaṉ* be able to find out about my affair with the lord of the fragrant country, when he is in the frenzy of his dance of possession?' (*Aiṅk.* 241)[79]

(d) *melukkam*: MTL *ad locum* 'ground prepared by smearing cow-dung water'.

(e) *cē-*: MTL *ad locum* 'to dwell, abide', but 'to lie, sleep', which is given *ad Puṟa.* 209 and *Poru.* 52, seems preferable.

(f) *kantu*, derived by the MTL from Skt. *skandha* (probably via a Prakrit *kandho*). The MTL gives a meaning 'post for cows to rub against', but *ad locum*: 'post representing a deity which is worshipped'. The religious significance of such a *kantu* is corroborated not only by *toḻa* 'worshipping' in the present passage, but also, for example, by *Akan.* 307, 11f: *potiyiṟ kaṭavuḷ pōkiya karun tāṭ kantattu* - 'in the pillar with a black foot, where the god has entered, in the public hall...'

[78] For an example see the beginning of the *Mul.*

[79] Poems 241 to 250 in that anthology have the common theme 'dance of the *vēlaṉ*'.

His dance is called *veriyāṭu* 'dance of wild frenzy'; Molucca beans (*kalaṅku*) are then used for some kind of oracle.[80] Then we hear of an effigy of the sick person which the priest 'lifts up and scrutinizes'.[81] The dance takes place on the *kaḷam* (see above) which has been covered with fresh clean sand.[82] The killing of a goat is also mentioned.[83]

But this *veriyāṭu* is not the privilege of the *vēlan* alone;[84] while he dances it under special circumstances, anybody may dance it in worship. Thus in *Paṭ.* (154 . . . 8) we hear of 'the large market-place where festivals never cease, which is crowded with girls (dancing) the *veriyāṭu* of Cevvēḷ'[85] or in *Kuri.* (174f): 'the threshing-ground (*kaḷam*) where girls dance who are experiencing the possession by Neṭuvēḷ'.[86] There are other dances of a religious significance which are usually associated with Murukan; of these the *kuravai* will require detailed discussion below.

Along with the worship and the dance, a number of paraphernalia are mentioned. Thus already in *Paṭ.* 156f we hear that 'flutes are piping, the lute is resounding, and the *mulavu* and *muracu* drums are reverberating . . .'[87] and in *Kuri :* 174-7, that 'garlands were put round the thick stem of the firmly rooted *kaṭampu* as decorations'.[88] Thus religious customs connected with Murukan involve music and items like flower-garlands. Since this will be met with again in the later bhakti texts, a few more examples may be mentioned. A bard is told:

'You may proceed on your journey, when you have played your black-bodied sweet lute for a while, praising the god of rare power in that place.'[89]

[80] See Nos. 245, 247-250.

[81] If that is the meaning of *kannan tūkki* in 245, 247; there is certainly no need for *kannam* to mean something as complex as 'small image (of gold) presented to a temple for effecting a cure' (MTL and commentator *ad locum*).

[82] *Aiṅk.* 248, 249; *Nar.* 268.

[83] *Kuru.* 362.

[84] We also hear of a 'priestess' or 'oracle-woman', the *cāliṇi.* e.g. *Mat.* 610 or *Cilap.* canto xii. But the name may well be the Skt. *śālinī*, and thus a purely Tamil origin is not clear.

[85] *Cevvēḷ/veriyāṭu makaḷiroṭu ceriya/ . . . /viḷav' arā viyal āvaṇattu.*

[86] *Neṭuvēḷ aṇaṅk' uru makaḷir āṭu kaḷam.*

[87] *Kuḷal akava yāḷ murala/muḷav' atira murac' iyampa.*

[88] *Tiṇi nilai kkaṭampiṉ tiraḷ arai vaḷaiiya . . . mālaiyir.*

[89] *Perump.* 390-2: *avvayiṉ/arun tiraṟ kaṭavuḷ vāḷtti cciṟitu num/karuṅ kōṭṭ' iṉṉ iyam iyakkiṉir kaḷimiṉ.* The temple is Tiruvehkā in Kāñcīpuram, and the god Nārāyaṇa.

That this was customary for bards is borne out by the following remark:

'When you see in the ancient town the god of a nature difficult to praise, and when you spend some time [there] in worship, *do not play* on your instrument even a little [because the rain would damage it].'[90]

We hear in general of 'that spacious place where the *mulavu* resounds, on the broad streets where festivals are held. . . .'[91] 'When at the evening festival the horn is sounded. . . .'[92] 'On all the streets, (young women) get into a frenzy, dance, sing, and make a loud noise.'[93] It is worth noting that it is usually in the public places, markets, roads and streets, or in the village, on the threshing-ground, that these festivals take place.

Here are some references to the utensils of worship.

Girls . . . light the wicks immersed in oil of the 'lights made of iron', scatter rice and flowers, and worship 'with their hands [viz. folded]' . . .[94]; young girls, holding flowers, and incense, worship . . .[95]; carrying many things, holding bright lamps in front and boiled rice . . . women undergoing a difficult pregnancy worship with devotion 'with their hands [folded]' . . .[96]

By now it will have been noticed that the various forms of religion mentioned involve exclusively girls and women. Therefore it may not be accidental that in later bhakti religion, where these forms of worship appear again, the psychology of the religious awareness is 'female'.[97]

3.215 *Summary*

When we compare the material presented here with the sketch

[90] *Mal.* 229-32: *mūtta puricai/pparāv aru marapiṟ kaṭavuṭ kāṇir/toḻāa nir kaḻiyiṉ allatu vaṟitu/numm iyan toṭutal ōmpumiṉ.*

[91] *Mat.* 327f: *muḻav' imiḻum akal āṅkaṇ/viḻavu niṉra viyaṉ maṟukil.*

[92] Ibid. 460: *anti viḻaviṟ ṟūriyaṅ kaṟaṅka*; compare Skt. *tūrya.*

[93] Ibid. 615f: *cēri toṟum/uraiyum pāṭṭum āṭṭum viraii.*

[94] *Neṭ.* 39.42f: *makaḷir/ . . irumpu cey viḷakkiṉ īrntiri kkoḷīi/nellu malarun tūuy kkai toḻutu.* — 'Lights made of iron' is a poetic paraphrase for 'metal lamp', *viḷakku* being used in a generic sense, 'light'; *īrn-tiri* MTL *ad locum* < *īr* 'moisture, wetness, oil'.

[95] *Mat.* 465f: *iḷam peṇṭir/pūviṉar pukaiviṉar toḻuvaṉar.*

[96] Ibid. 606 . . 609: *palav uṭaṉ/oṇ cuṭar viḷakka munt' uṟa maṭaiyoṭu/ . . . /kaṭuñ cūṉ makaḷir pēṇi kkai toḻutu.*

[97] On the 'male' *kuravai* see 3.5 and Appendix VIII.

of 'folk religion' in the North (see above, 1.43), we notice a number of close similarities. These can be best explained, I think, by postulating a very archaic and universally Indian form of popular religion of non-Āryan origin. As a special Southern (=Tamil) development, the figure of Murukaṉ and perhaps the *veṟiyāṭu*, may be derived from that universal pattern. Its entire rationale is clearly incongruous with Upaniṣadic ideology (as also with the religion of the early Vedas); we have seen above how time and again terms were given a negative meaning by Jain and Buddhist works. But while in the North this 'folk religion' never stood a chance of asserting itself, of reaching any autonomy or sophistication, because of centuries of Upaniṣadic ideology, the situation in the South was different. Not only could a high culture evolve here independently of the North, a culture in which common 'folk' elements were intrinsically amalgamated with typical Tamil features like Murukaṉ, but the pressures from Upaniṣadic ideology were of much more restricted duration and impact (Jainism and Buddhism dominated the Southern scene for not more than three or four centuries). Thus when bhakti religion made its influence felt in the South, it fell on fertile and congenial ground.

In view of this encounter with bhakti religion, it will be appropriate to abstract here two points from the analysis of early *caṅkam* religion given above, points which in my opinion played an important rôle in the encounter with bhakti religion: (a) the absence of a clear awareness of 'transcendence', which allowed for a visualization of the divine within the confines of earthly reality, and (b) the sensual character of worship (viz. the charm of music and dancing, the beauty of flowers, the fragrance of incense, the light of lamps and so on). The ecstasy of the emotions in which the 'divine' was felt to be present links both facets.

The previous pages have attempted to show both that early *caṅkam* society had an awareness which we must characterize as 'religious', and also how this religious awareness expressed itself. However, our results do not stand in direct contradiction to the characterization of *caṅkam* literature given by Kailasapathy and Zvelebil; they are only complementary. We certainly seem to be justified in saying that this society was permeated by a sense of religion, and that particularly in the figure of Murukaṉ it embodied its two great ideals of love and heroism. But once this general situation has been stated, modifications and additional

features have to be pointed out. Thus it certainly is significant that many of the forms of worship noted above are associated with women; and it appears that with another social group, the élite or *cāṉṟōr*, we can now speak of an awareness *over and above* the general religious spirit, which is expressed in the 'poetic theory' and bardic tradition.

3.22 *The bardic tradition of the classical* caṅkam *age*[98]

In the previous chapter I have tried to show that the crucial issue is not the question whether classical Tamil society was 'secular' or 'religious', and that it is in fact the wrong question to ask. What has to be analysed is how the so-called bardic tradition or literary theory (which contains the ideal of the *cāṉṟōṉ*) relates to that society (in which, as we have seen, the 'divine' was visualized within the confines of ordinary life). In order to arrive at an approximate answer to this general question, it is necessary to begin with the characteristics of that theory itself; this will, at the same time, be useful for later chapters, which will constantly refer to the theory and its critical terminology. The basic division of the poetic material into *akam* and *puṟam* has been mentioned above; we can now simplify our discussion by concentrating on the *akam* material. This is legitimate not only because the greater bulk of extant *caṅkam* poetry belongs to that category, but also because it was *akam*, not *puṟam*, which was of importance in the formation of Southern Kṛṣṇa bhakti.

Akam poetry functions as a conventionalized relationship between the emotions of love and an external 'landscape' — a stylized and idealized conception of the *real* landscape. 'Conventionalized' means here that *particular* features of the natural habitat are related to particular emotions or emotive circumstances. In the most

[98] The essentials about *caṅkam* literary theory can be found in a number of works. Gros, 1968, p. xxxi, note 2, mentions a variety of books, to which one can add now Ramanujan, 1967[1], 1970[2], Kailasapathy, 1968, and particularly Zvelebil, 1973, 1974. I have not provided bibliographical references for individual remarks about the theory when they were non-controversial. On the other hand, chronological, sociological, and psychological observations made here are original, if not otherwise stated, and so is the attempt to provide something like a rationale for the system. Particular aspects of the poetry have been analysed by Manickam, 1962, and Varadarajan, 1969.

general manner, this is achieved by dividing the whole of 'nature' (in so far as poetically relevant) into five different individual 'landscapes', called *tiṇai*; together they are *aintiṇai* 'Five-Landscapes' or *akattiṇai* 'Landscape of Love'.[99] They are correlated to five different emotive circumstances called *uri (pporuḷ)*; thus, for example, the landscape of the hills relates to the first passionate union of lovers. Each pair is then commonly denoted by the name of a flower, like *kuṟiñci* for the example mentioned.[100]

Within this general frame of poetic conventions, we find a much more elaborate system of conventions functioning. A *tiṇai* can be denoted poetically by any of a great number of 'typical' features of that landscape, known as *karu* (*pporuḷ*).[101] Such *karus* are: trees, flowers, birds and other animals, groups of people, their occupations and pastimes, etc. By itself, each of these *karus* can evoke the whole complex, including the *uri*. Once the basic pattern of such poetic association was established, it could develop its own autonomy or momentum; thus the seasons and times of the day were integrated into the structure. 'Evening' and 'rainy season' would refer to the *mullai* landscape, evoking the sentiments of a lonely wife waiting for the return of her husband.[102] The five basic categories were then further divided into a number of conventional 'themes'

[99] Why these particular five, or how this division came about, has preoccupied a number of writers. One of the most fanciful explanations has been put forward by the Rev. Thani Nayagam, 1963[1], 1966[2], pp. 58-64. He interprets these five *tiṇai* as different habitats of the ancient Tamils during successive stages of their history, to which he then relates the corresponding 'various strata of development in the religious thought of the Tamils' (p. 58). The rationale for this hypothesis lies in the assumption of a Tamil *Urmonotheismus*.

[100] This 'flower symbolism' has induced some writers to interpret it as 'totemism', e.g., Kailasapathy, 1968, p. 190, or Singaravelu, 1966, pp. 140-66. The 'latter author actually concludes on that basis 'God and the clan or at least its leader were regarded as only one. . . . The divine principle . . . could therefore be nothing else than the clan itself.' (p. 163)

[101] Since the landscapes themselves are idealized or stylized conceptions, there is obviously here ample scope not only for 'realistic' motifs, but also for accidental, arbitrary features.

[102] In this particular case, parallels in other *corpora* of Indian literature, e.g., the early anthology *Sattasaī*, allow us to reconstruct the developments that lead to the association *mullai*: lonely wife: rainy season. Since it was customary for travellers to return home by the beginning of the rainy season, the correlation between the *uri* and the season was 'natural', and because of this — we may infer — the season could then, via the *uri*, be related to the *mullai* landscape.

(*tu̲rai*); for example: for *ku̲riñci* we have the genre already mentioned above: the mother calls the *vēla̲n* to divine the cause of the girl's illness.

The outlines of the whole system may be illustrated by the following table:

TABLE VI

flower	*tiṇai*	*uri*	*karu*[103]
ku̲riñci	hill and mountain	sexual union	millet fields, waterfalls
pālai[104]	arid region, desert	separation, hardship	vulture, robbers, starving elephants
mullai[105]	forests and pastures	patient waiting of wife	bull, cowherd, rainy season
marutam	agricultural land	sulking of wife, usually because of husband's affairs with prostitutes	stork, heron, rivers
neytal[106]	seashore	anxiety, agony of separation	sharks, fishermen

But all these conventionalized patterns which were available to the poet would obviously not of themselves make good poetry; they figure only as a general coding system by which he could make his statements. To achieve this he would employ primarily two stylistic means: 'metaphor' (*uvamai* < Skt. *upamā*) and 'suggestion' (*i̲raicci*, or *u̲ḷḷu̲rai uvamai*).[107] By means of these devices, features of the external landscape could be related to *nuances*

[103] These are only a few selected examples.

[104] Zvelebil, 1973, p. 96, suggests that *ku̲riñci* and *pālai* were the original categories of *caṅkam* poetry, and that the remaining three were added to these at a later stage.

[105] For a detailed account of the *mullaittiṇai* see below, 3.42; compare also Zvelebil, 1975.

[106] This is probably the least clearly defined category; Ammūva̲n, the author of a hundred *neytal* poems in the *Aiṅk.*, describes all *uris* against a *neytal* landscape as background (compare Manickam, 1962, pp. 208-11). *Neytal* and *mullai* in particular tend to merge; compare below pp. 166, 382.

[107] Zvelebil, 1973, p. 109 renders *u̲ḷḷu̲rai* by 'allegory', and p. 102 by 'implied simile' or 'implied metaphor'. The term 'allegory' ought to be strictly avoided, because it has connotations totally alien to *caṅkam* poetry. Moreover, Ā̲lvār songs,

of emotions or emotive situations. In the first case, viz. metaphor, the logical relationship between the two objects compared can easily be perceived and paraphrased.

Thundering clouds closely crowd together,
unable to move along the sky carrying the rains,
resembling girls during their first pregnancy,
who are too fatigued to move about. . . . (*Kuṟu.* 287, *mullai*)

Iṟaicci is the area of greatest ingenuity, subtlety, and poetic imagination for the *caṅkam* poets; usually it evades paraphrase and relies on an intuitive perception of the relationship expressed.

She who has in her heart
the lord of the shore along the deep sea,
where live mighty and frightening sharks
which tear asunder and escape from those thickly knotted nets
thrown into the clear water by the vigorous fishermen. . . (*Naṟ.* 303, *neytal*)

Here the comparison rests on the concatenation 'lord of the shore where . . .'; the sea over which he rules suggests his own character: where sharks can spoil the fishermen's labour without punishment. One of the possible interpretations with regard to the girl's situation would be to see in the girl's 'trying to keep him in her heart' an attempt to keep his love, which thus is a simile for the nets through which the shark always manages to escape.[108] Because of the motivation of such *iṟaicci*, such descriptive passages must not be regarded as primarily naturalistic.[109]

Now with the help of what has been said in the previous chapter about *caṅkam* religion, it is easy to relate one further element to this system of poetic creation, viz. Murukaṉ. As god of youth

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to which allegory is equally inapplicable, lost all their distinctive character through the allegorical (in the strict sense) interpretations of the commentators.

108 The previous example contained within the *uvamai* an *uḷḷuṟai*, in that the clouds suggest that she herself is pregnant.

109 Compare on this point Varadarajan: 'the external world is brought into direct relationship with their [=poets] individual feelings. . .' (p. 356). 'There are reproductions of sights and sounds from Nature . . . but they are not pure descriptions dissociated from any purpose. Nature . . . is utilized as illustration or background for other themes' (p. 404) and Thani Nayagam: 'Tamil poetry . . . was realistic. It portrayed the actual customs of the people and the actual state of the landscape.' (p. 87)

and beauty, envisaged within the 'landscape' of reality, and implicated in the 'suffering' (*aṇaṅku*) of girls, in many ways he easily fits in with the poetic conventions. Thus we have already noticed the poems in which the *vēlaṉ* is called to divine the girl's (love) sickness. Usually this is given a humorous turn by the poets, a point at which we may recognize the 'secular' flavour of the bardic tradition. To the relief of the girl, the lover remains undisclosed as the real cause of the illness in spite of the *vēlaṉ*, who is therefore once called 'ignorant'.[110] He will say that it is Murukaṉ who has possessed the girl. But these poems do not really make fun of an 'ancient tribal custom', because, as *Aiṅk.* 247 indicates, the poetic purpose of the genre is to *compare* the lover with the *ideal* of all lovers, Murukaṉ:

> When (the *vēlaṉ*) who knows 'what there is' . . . says: '[It is] Muruku [who causes her disease]', would that not be indeed the name of the lord . . . of the hill difficult [to climb]![111]

Thus it is not legitimate to infer from such poems an anti-religious attitude.[112] By his very nature, Murukaṉ would occur in *akam* contexts where youth and beauty was involved, and since this primarily was in *kuṟiñci* (and since, as we have seen, he is also the god residing in the hills), a particularly frequent mention of him in *kuṟiñci* poems would only be logical. It is then as *uḷḷuṟai uvamai* that he occurs, for example, in the *vēlaṉ* poems or in other poems about the 'lord of the mountain country'. This distinction is vital for the understanding of the argument I shall put forward in the following chapters. Since, as I hope to show, Māyōṉ is practically unknown in older *akam* poems, there is no need (or in fact, no justification) for the assumption that Murukaṉ in the old poetry figures as a *karu*. He could have functioned as *karu* only if, by force

[110] *Aṟiyā* in *Aiṅk.* 243.

[111] *ākuvat' aṟivaṉ . . Muruk' eṉa moḻiyum āyiṉ/aru varai nāṭaṉ peyar kolōv atuvē*? The particle *kolō*, wherever I have come across it, implies wonder, surprise, astonishment, but always indicating a positive answer.

[112] Gros takes these poems as indication of a general attitude of the period, and contrasts them with the hymns to Cevvēḷ in the *Paripāṭal*, where — according to him — Murukaṉ for the first time is taken seriously as a religious figure. I cannot agree with this interpretation, because even if the *akam* poems indicate a slight 'secular' tendency concerning Murukaṉ, this does not imply that Murukaṉ as a *religious* figure, or religion as such, was not accepted in the first place. See Gros, pp. xliiif.

of the system itself, all other four landscapes had also had their 'typical' gods during this early period. My claim is that Murukan in the old poetry is not a *karu* of *kuṟiñci*, and that the division into five landscapes did not originally affect the one Tamil god Murukan, who could be visualized as part of 'nature'.

An interesting feature of this poetic tradition is that on the one hand it exploits — as far as we can tell — all possibilities of natural landscape, while on the other hand it obviously does not comprise all logically possible forms of love. We can conclude from this that the *aintiṇai* is in fact normative (because restrictive) concerning matters of love, or in other words, it presents an *ideal*. Now it may have been because some existing poems did not comply with this ideal, or because of a shift in literary taste, that these restrictions became apparent and the necessity arose for further categories. However that may be, the theoreticians created two further 'landscapes' which had no relation to any external geographical reality, but allowed for poetic treatment of types of love not included in the ideal. These are the *kaikkiḷai* (defined as vulgar passion, one-sided, or violent love) and *peruntiṇai*, the 'excessive landscape', which deals with a love that in its excessive passion breaks through the normal *decorum*. It is here that we find descriptions of folk customs like the bull-fight and *maṭal*.

One last restriction of *akam* poetry has to be pointed out: not only had the love depicted to conform to the ideal, but the lovers themselves had to be idealized, typified. It was taboo in poetry to name lovers, or to describe real persons in *akam* lyrics (while in *puṟam* reference to concrete persons, particularly the patrons, were the rule). In *Tolk.* III, 1000 this is laid down:

> Considering that the five landscapes of *akam* speak about people [in general], the name of [any] individual person must not be mentioned.[113]

The *akam* hero or heroine are strictly anonymous types. But it is a different matter when in the *descriptive* portion of a poem proper names occur. For example, *Kuṟu.* 80:

> Full of love, I shall go and play in the river; . . . if she is afraid of this, let her protect . . . the chest of her husband, as if it were the large herd of cattle of Eḷiṉi.

113 *makkaḷ nutaliya akaṉ ain tiṇaiyum/cuṭṭi oruvar ppeyar koḷa pperāar.*

Here a prostitute speaks, threatening the wife of her favourite lover. The Eḷiṉi[114] is a figure of legend from the past, famous for the bravery he showed in defending his cattle, when raiders tried to steal them from him. In *Kuṟu*, 210 we hear of 'the ghee that was obtained from the many cows . . . in the forest of Naḷḷi, who has a powerful chariot. . . ' This Naḷḷi may well have been the poet's actual patron, and thus the reference here would be indirect flattery. Murukaṉ is another proper name which may be introduced into an *akam* poem. Like 'Eḷiṉi' in the example quoted above, he figures then as *iṟaicci* (as I have postulated above). Even if the poet had wanted to write an *akam* poem about his patron, he could have done this only either by abstracting from the concrete person, or by mentioning him in a descriptive phrase functioning as *uḷḷuṟai*.

3.23 *Summary*

I think we have collected now sufficient evidence for the assumption that classical *caṅkam* poetry is a refined, sophisticated, and idealized form of literature, which by virtue of that character, can be related to the élitist class of the *cāṉṟōr*, because it bears in its very structure the mark of a normative ideal in contrast with the common and vulgar. This assumption, strictly speaking, is an extrapolation, because to be very precise one could only say that the 'ideal' is exclusively of poetic style. But if we consider the larger context which I have tried to delineate, an approximation of the poetic to the social seems plausible, particularly in view of the fact that both *akam* and *puṟam* poetry is 'commissioned' art. But a more general question is of greater importance for our purposes: how did this 'poetic tradition' function in relation to the class it belonged to? By saying that the *cāṉṟōṉ* could see his own ideals reflected in this poetry, clearly only part of this function is described. One could perhaps call this overall function 'ideology', which I think is roughly what Kailasapathy and Zvelebil meant by 'secular tradition'. By ideology I mean that it constitutes a particular approach to the world, an approach which centres on man's two ambitions: to love and to prove himself in heroic deeds. Here we would then not have a contrast (*qua* secular ideal) to Tamil 'folk

[114] Mentioned also in *Akan.* 105, 10-15.

religion', because even there the world of man remains the focal point of awareness (if only a less critical awareness). I would regard the 'poetic tradition' as the culmination and one of the logical conclusions of the underlying current of 'anthropocentrism' generally found in ancient Tamil culture.[115] As an 'ideology' or culturally perpetuated awareness, this tradition would function as a kind of theory about the world, in that the unconscious reaction to the outside world would be conditioned by the emotive implications of the elements of the world as far as they were contained in that theory.

I would summarize the results obtained here in the following manner. Instead of approaching the 'poetic tradition' of the *caṅkam* literature as if it represented *exclusively* the classical world view, or as if it reflected the *whole* of that society, it seems more appropriate to see in it the cultural superstructure belonging to a particular social class. It overlay the popular awareness of the world (which includes the 'divine') as a normative ideology of a more pronounced humanistic or anthropocentric inspiration, typical of the élite in that society. It was basically an *associative structure* which would condition the emotive response to phenomena experienced. Elements emerging from 'folk religion' were coloured by it, just as in the encounter with Northern influences it was to play the dominant rôle. However limited, selective and hypothetical our treatment of the individual details of this ancient Tamil culture, I hope that we have arrived at a basically correct understanding of the cultural 'flavour' of ancient Tamil society and of those elements that were to play the primary rôle in the encounter with the North.

3.3 Early references to Māyōn

In the previous chapter I have characterized what to me appear to

[115] As corroborative evidence I would point out two examples here:

(a) The influence of Jainism and Buddhism aimed precisely at this 'anthropocentrism', and when a Tamil reaction against this influence was formulated, it resorted precisely to the extreme of this 'humanism' — the 'vulgarity' of the *Kalittokai*.

(b) When bhakti became known in the South, many of the resulting features can only be understood against the background of this anthropocentrism; thus bhakti as 'separation' only made sense if the *bhakta* remained basically aware of his empirical existence, and saw that as something positive, or at least as something that he could *not* sublimate or discard.

be the typical features of ancient Tamil society: a general this-worldly or anthropocentric awareness of reality (implicating the 'divine') and a sophisticated superstructure in the form of the more 'secular' poetic associative system, with Murukan providing a link between 'religion', poetry, and the ideal of the élite (love and heroism). Such a characterization is an abstraction, for none of the extant sources offer such a pure or exclusive picture. Jainism and Buddhism betray their influence on that society, just as the presence of brahmins is documented. But in the present state of our knowledge of that period it is difficult to assess the relative importance of any of these, just as further research alone will be able to delineate all the many strands of influence that were woven into the texture of South Indian civilization. We are concerned here solely with Kṛṣṇaism, and we now have to see how 'Kṛṣṇa' was integrated into Southern culture and religion. There are eight fragments[116] that have to be discussed in the present chapter, all of which may be assumed — with some degree of certainty — to belong to a period not later than the third century AD.[117] Considering the chronological situation of the sources discussed above in Part 2, one will expect *a priori* that none of the features like 'Kṛṣṇa, the lover of the *gopīs*' will be found in these early fragments. But the correct interpretation of these features, when they do occur in the Tamil texts[118] will depend on the analysis of the earlier references to Kṛṣṇa in the *caṅkam corpus*.

3.31 *Translation*

I shall first simply give a translation of the eight relevant fragments, and then try to evaluate them systematically. There are two early Songs in the collection *Pattuppāṭṭu* which mention, in the course of descriptions of the towns Maturai and Kāñcīpuram, a few features of Kṛṣṇa religion.

[116] See Appendix V for the original Tamil texts and the general information on the poems.

[117] It is obviously impossible to prove a precise date for each poem; I have tried to provide at least some corroborative evidence when possible as justification for having included a poem in this chapter. On the other hand, poems that are not discussed here but in later chapters, e.g. *Akan.* 59, betray — in my opinion — clear marks of their late date.

[118] That is, from 3.5 on.

(1) On the festive day of *Śravaṇa* on which Māyōn, who has defeated the demons in great numbers and who [wears] the beautiful garland, manifested himself: (...) people who [want to] watch fierce elephants being instigated to fight with each other by the *maṟavar*[119] of great bravery who wear garlands crowded by bees, (...) are reeling about [without control over where they are walking] so that they hurt themselves on the stones, completely intoxicated by the strong honey-liquor.

(2) (A bard gives advice to another bard)
'We have [just] come from him [= Tiraiyaṉ]; hear about his country, if you too want to proceed towards Tiraiyaṉ with many spears, (...) of the lineage of Him whose colour is that of the ocean, whose chest is marked with Śrī, and who transcends the broad earth — a descendant of the hero from the family which that [same] ocean's shore produced. . . .'

(3) . . . there, where He reclines on the serpent couch, resembling an elephant lying on the mountain slope beautiful with *kāntaḷ* flowers in thick clusters. . . .

(4) (About the town Kacci:)
It appears delightful to the eyes like the pericarp of the lotus that has many petals, which gives birth to the 'singular' person with four faces [=Brahmā] in the navel of the Exalted One with the body of dark-blue colour. . . .

Further references, found in the *Puṟanāṉūṟu*, mention Māyōn in 'heroic' contexts.

(5) In former times, when the world was being protected (...) by Him who is mighty with valour, whose Bird [=Garuḍa]-banner reaches up to the sky, and whose body resembles a sapphire which has been polished and [thus] is brilliant. . . .

(6) 'O Māraṉ rich in fame, of excellence worthy of praise, like Māyōn, for those who associate with singing of fame!'

Now it is quite remarkable that we have not more than two genuinely old references to Māyōn in *akam* poems, and that neither is classified as *mullai*, although the second contains some *mullai* elements.

(7) (The friend advises the girl:)
'Do not believe it to be definite truth when it has been said: "The lord of that mountain with white waterfalls, shining like Vāliyōṉ [=Balarāma], on the slopes of the mountain black like Māyōṉ, desires us constantly and is in great agony."'

[119] Said to be *inter alia* the inhabitants of the desert or hill region, hunters, warriors, heroes. Here it could mean 'mahout'.

(**8**) (The love-sick girl, separated from her husband, speaks:)
'My friend!
My lover who has crossed the horrid desert,
did he not say,
while pronouncing difficult oaths in many ways
and clasping my wrist with the choice bracelets:
"After finishing my work I shall return–
at the time
when the clouds [filled with] cool rain hang low,
when lightning flashes many times
which is [brighter] than the spear
raised for victory in the battle
of Ālaṅkāṉam by Ceḻiyaṉ whose
tall chariot resembles the wind
and whose hands are strong,
when fierce thunder resembling the drum [of Ceḻiyaṉ]
roars through the vast black sky,
and when a rainbow of many colours spreads
across above the country
as the garland hangs across
the valorous chest of the Lord
who has the discus which is filled
with sharp rays (=Viṣṇu/Kṛṣṇa)"?'

Compared with the many references to Murukaṉ, and with the important rôle of Māyōṉ in later Tamil works, the material collected here is indeed limited.

3.32 *Place of origin*

We had best start our discussion of these eight references by investigating their place of origin. This does not create any difficulties; the Pāṇṭiya kingdom, with Maturai as its capital, is the only one of the three classical Tamil kingdoms which is presented here. No. **1** by its very title proclaims its connection with Maturai; Nos. **5**, **6**, and **8** are in praise of Pāṇṭiya kings[120] and No. **7**, by virtue of its author, can also be related to the Pāṇṭiyas. While in other respects *caṅkam* culture would appear to be evenly represented by all three kingdoms, the total absence of a mention of Māyōṉ in Cēra or

[120] The two kings mentioned are: Ilavantikai . . . Naṉmāraṉ in Nos. **5** and **6**, and Ālaṅkāṉattu . . . Neṭuñ Ceḻiyaṉ II in Nos. **1** and **8**.

Cōḷa contexts is striking. Nos. **2** to **4** belong to Kāñcīpuram, a town strictly speaking at the very fringe of *caṅkam* culture. This rather strange geographical distribution will be met with again in connection with the Āḻvārs; for the present period I think it is possible to explain it by assuming that 'Māyōṉ' was closely linked with *political*, i.e. *dynastic* factors.

3.33 *Identity of Māyōṉ*

The next question to be asked here concerns the identity of Māyōṉ, which means investigating whether it is possible to differentiate various individual aspects of the composite figure of Viṣṇu/Kṛṣṇa/Nārāyaṇa in Northern sources.

No. **1** beyond doubt refers to the Kṛṣṇa of Mathurā/Vraja, as the phrase 'who manifested himself during the month *Śravaṇa*' shows.[121] Of a more general 'Vaiṣṇava' nature are the references in Nos. **2** and **8**; perhaps Nos. **3** and **4** could be separated as being more typical of Nārāyaṇa.

The attribute that most caught the fancy of the poets is obviously the dark complexion of Māyōṉ: in No. **2** his colour is compared to that of the ocean, in No. **5** to that of a sparkling polished sapphire, and in No. **3** (by implication) to that of an elephant. Nos. **4** and **7** too mention his dark skin. The word 'māyōṉ' itself means 'person of dark complexion'[122] and there can hardly be any doubt that we are dealing here with a Tamil translation of the Skt. *kṛṣṇa*/Kṛṣṇa.[123] Some other specific attributes are mentioned: we hear of his garland in Nos. **1** and **8**,[124] his banner with the bird is mentioned in No. **5**, No. **2** refers to Śrī (or the *śrīvatsa?*)[125], and No. **8** mentions the flashing discus. Another important feature is his valour in battle:

[121] Also Nos. **5** and **7** perhaps indicate the same figure, on account of the parallelism Kṛṣṇa: Baladeva. But Vāsudeva: Saṅkarṣaṇa is of importance in the Pāñcarātra, too.

[122] In which general meaning it is used, for example in *Puṟa.* 229 and 291, just as the corresponding feminine *māyōḷ* occurs frequently, for example in *Kuṟu.* 9, 132, 199, 259.

[123] For a more detailed discussion of the various names and the identity of Māyōṉ see below, 3.711.

[124] But since this is a common epithet of kings as well, not much emphasis can be placed on it.

[125] But here again this epithet is not exclusive to Māyōṉ; see *Mal.***356**: *Tiruvalār mārpaṉ* 'he whose chest holds Fortune', as reference to king Naṉṉaṉ.

he fights against *asuras* (No. **1**), he is mighty with valour (No. **5**), famous for his heroism (No. **6**, by implication), and victorious (No. **8**). In No. **2** a royal dynasty traces its origin back to him.[126]

On the whole, it would actually seem to be the wrong question to ask even at this early stage, whether elements belonging specifically to 'Viṣṇu', 'Kṛṣṇa', or 'Nārāyaṇa' can be identified. While the absence of 'Kṛṣṇa the lover of the *gopīs*' is clear, the 'Nārāyaṇa' of Nos. **3** and **4** and the 'Kṛṣṇa' of No. **1**, even if distinct in themselves, are not necessarily different from the 'Māyōn' in the other references.

3.34 *Sociological and ideological implications*

We obtain a more definite pattern when we turn to the sociological and ideological implications of these references.

No. **1** makes it clear that Kṛṣṇa's birthday was celebrated in popular society — although the passage does not necessarily suggest that the elephant fights or the drinking of liquor were directly connected with that celebration, viz. that they were specifically Kṛṣṇa-oriented; they may just as well be features common to any form of festival. None of the other passages show anything like this pronounced 'popular religious flavour'.

No. **3** (along with lines 390-2) documents a more sophisticated type of religion, viz. the worship of Māyōn in the temple. The temple mentioned here, Vehkā (according to the commentators), would seem to have been the only one known during this early period as specifically 'Vaiṣṇavite'.

No. **2** shows a third aspect of Kṛṣṇa religion: it provides the ideological basis for a dynasty (that of Toṇṭaimān) which traces its origin back to that god. Moreover, this symbolism is extended to the conception of the town of Kacci, in that it is identified with the pericarp of the mythical lotus growing in Viṣṇu's navel (No. **4**). It is clear that we are dealing here with pronouncedly Northern features.

3.35 *Political overtones*

Now some of the fragments belonging to Maturai would seem

[126] Here in No. **2**, the phrase *iru nilan kaṭanta* may (as the commentators suggest) refer to his exploits as Vāmana, but this is not definitely implied in the phrase itself.

to suggest in a similar manner, though certainly much less pronouncedly 'Northern', such political overtones. In No. **6**, we find a comparison of Māṟaṉ with Māyōṉ — fame and heroism being the *tertium* here. This is also the case in No. **5**.[127] For No. **5** we are given a genre called *pūvai nilai*, which according to the traditional interpretation would show that such comparisons of (Pāṇṭiya) kings with Māyōṉ are more than accidental. The definition which the *Tolkāppiyam*[128] gives of the genre reads as follows:

> The literary genre [denoted by the name of the flower] *pūvai*[129] [= kāyāmpū] [consists in] the undecaying excellent praise of the great heroism of a king who is comparable [or compared?] to Māyōṉ.[130]

In later texts, the *pūvai* or *kāyā* flower is frequently compared to Kṛṣṇa's dark-blue complexion; thus the association of a king's heroism (via Māyōṉ) with this flower does not seem altogether arbitrary.

3.36 *Association with the Pāṇṭiyas*

But however obscure this may be, we are probably here only on the surface of a much more complicated and evasive problem. It is impossible to unravel the complexities here. In Appendix VI I have collected material that suggests the assumption of a political association of Māyōṉ with the Pāṇṭiyas. Taking all the evidence together, it may be legitimate to speak of Māyōṉ as a religious figure associated with Pāṇṭiya royal symbolism, parallel to the symbolism of Toṇṭaimāṉ and Kacci. Even independently of the *pūvai-nilai* or Neṭiyōṉ, **5**, **6** and **8** themselves show a connection between a 'heroic Māyōṉ' and Pāṇṭiya kings. Such a link with the Pāṇṭiya court must not be pressed too far; for example, this does

[127] Although this is not apparent from the extract quoted here.

[128] *Sūtra* 1006 = III, 2, 5, lines 9f.

[129] Oblong cordate-leaved bilberry.

[130] *Māyōṉ mēya maṉ peruñ ciṟappiṉ/ tāvā viḻu ppukaḻ ppūvai nilaiyum*. I take *mēyam* to be-*upamēyam*; this is what the commentator implies. An alternative interpretation, parallel to *mēya* in *Mat.* 590 (see No. **1** above), from *mēvu-*, would yield a translation 'in whom Māyōṉ manifests himself' (see note 136 below); a second alternative would be: 'who is attached to/loves/has reached Māyōṉ.' A further complication is that other examples said to belong to the genre, viz. *Puṟa.* 8, 9, 10, 59, 374 do not seem to contain a direct reference to Māyōṉ at all. Thus it is not altogether clear what this genre is supposed to contain.

not imply that the early Pāṇṭiyas were 'Vaiṣṇavas' or that Vaiṣṇavism was the 'state religion'.[131] These Vaiṣṇava features cannot have been more than facets of a much more variegated religious situation in that kingdom.

This leaves the question of the name of the town itself. Gros hesitates to accept the etymology < Mathurā:[132] '*Aucun trait du Pa*[*ripāṭal*] *ne suggère ce rapprochement, et aucune allusion vishnouite ne se rapporte à une localisation dans le Nord.*'[133] But, if anything, he considers the remaining two etymologies that have been suggested, viz. < Skt. *madhuram* and Ta. < *marutam* even less likely. But in view of the court symbolism involving Kṛṣṇa, I think that Maturai may well be < Mathurā.

3.37 *Māyōṉ's rôle in* akam *poems*

Although the *Tolkāppiyam* makes explicit provision for Māyōṉ in *akam* poetry (as will be seen in 3.41 below), and although Murukaṉ figures quite prominently in classical *akam* lyrics, it is striking that we have only two such references to Māyōṉ in the present material. Moreover, the rule enjoined in the *Tolk*. connects Māyōṉ with the *mullai tiṇai*, while the two poems found here are classified as *kuṟiñci* (No. 7) and *pālai* (No. **8**). In No. 7, the reference to Māyōṉ has no other poetic function than to provide a metaphor for the dark-green slopes of the mountain. No. **8** is more complicated, because lines 10-18 deal with the rainy season, and the general situation of the poem is that of a girl waiting for the return of her lover, both of which features would fall into the category *mullai*. Now it is impossible to decide whether Kṛṣṇa is mentioned here (in line 14) (a) because of the royal symbolism in lines 10-12 (thunder and lightning are compared to the war-drum and the lances of the Pāṇṭiya king Ceḻiyaṉ II who won the battle at Ālaṅkāṉam), or (b) because of the *mullai* theme. As an isolated example, the poem illustrates an inchoate association of Māyōṉ with *mullai*, as codified in the *Tolk*. and then fully exploited in late *caṅkam* works and in the Āḻvārs. But the evidence to be derived from the

[131] Thus even in much later times, the Indianized kingdoms of Indochina knew of Buddhism as the religion of the people, while brahmins would perform certain court rituals.

[132] pp. xxvif, where all details of the discussion can be found.

[133] p. xxvii.

above eight fragments does not, in my opinion, allow us to regard this association as generally operative at this early stage.

3.38 *Summary*

We may now summarize the results obtained so far. We have seen that during the classical *caṅkam* period, viz. up to the third century AD or so, Kṛṣṇaism/Vaiṣṇavism had gained access to two *royal courts*: that of Kāñcī at the very fringe of Tamil culture but more open to Northern influences, and that of Maturai. This association with the courts seems to me to be the most pronounced feature of the material found here, and may well explain even the occurrence of Māyōn in a *mullai* theme (in No. **8**). Nevertheless we also have evidence that Māyōn was not unknown in segments of society other than the courts. We find on a popular level (in Maturai) that the purāṇic *Kṛṣṇa-carita* was known,[134] just as in Kāñcī we hear of a temple of Nārāyaṇa where a bard would sing and play his lute. Yet compared with the figure of Murukan, Māyōn during this period is still peripheral and by no means integrated into the bardic tradition of *akam* lyrics, just as the feature 'lover of the *gopīs*' is still unknown. The *Mahābhārata* and early derivates of the *PurPañc* could be thought of as the most likely sources of Kṛṣṇaism for the South during this period.

In the following chapter we shall analyse a few documents indicating a more advanced integration of 'Māyōn' into the *akam* tradition at a slightly later date.

3.4 Standardization of Māyōn's position in the akattiṇai

3.41 The *Tolkāppiyam*

As we have seen in the previous chapter, Māyōn's function during

[134] There is a rather obscure passage, *Cila.* 22, 89-102, which may possibly give us evidence of a more pronounced class-distinction between the 'royal Māyōn' and the 'popular Māyōn'. In lines 37-61 the 'god of the royal class' is compared to Neṭiyōn who here may well be Viṣṇu. The 'god of the first class' (*āti pūtattu kaṭavuḷ* 36) is indentical with Brahmā (= *Vēta mutalvan* 'the first (cause) of the Vedas'), and Śiva is clearly linked with the *vaiśyas* (lines 86-8). No such apparent connection is established with the 'god of the *śūdras*' (lines 89-102). But line 97 is identical with *Puṟa.* 56, 5 (see No. **5**) except that by the addition of *-an* to *mēṉi* the attribute is

the heroic age was primarily as a dynastic symbol connected with specific Pāṇṭiya and Kāñcī kings. At the same time, the individual poet was connected with specific patrons, which meant that with the general decline of the bardic tradition and poetic patronage this particular function of Māyōn had little chance of survival. On the other hand, Māyōn's occurrence in *akam* lyrics (which by their rigid conventions were less exposed to particular social or political circumstances) during that same period can be described only as accidental. Only in one case is Māyōn mentioned in connection with a *mullai* theme, and even then only within an overall *pālai* context and, moreover, closely linked with a reference to the Pāṇṭiya king Ālaṅkāṉattu . . . Celiyaṉ. That in spite of all this Māyōn was to play a very important rôle in later *caṅkam* poetry — a rôle which then became of particular importance with some of the Āḻvārs — is due to certain developments which as far as we know took place during the centuries immediately after the classical *caṅkam* age. A *poetic theory* is now formulated which systematizes the older bardic tradition, and in this theory, Māyōn is given a definite place in the *mullai tiṇai*. The *locus classicus* for this convention is the *Tolkāppiyam*, Book III.

Tolkāppiyam 951 (=III, 1, 5):

The region where forests grow[135] which is liked by[136] Māyōn, the region of the mountains with clouds, liked by Murukaṉ, the region of the fresh-waters which Vēntaṉ (=Indra) likes, the region of the vast sands (of the beaches)

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changed into a personal noun: 'He of the body resembling a sparkling polished sapphire'. This literary allusion may well suggest that Kṛṣṇa is meant here, in which case we might have a pattern Viṣṇu/Paraśurāma (Neṭiyōn) - *kṣatriya*: Kṛṣṇa - *śūdra*.

135 The phrase *kāṭ' uṟai* bears a striking resemblance to *Poru.* 52 *kāṭ' uṟai kaṭavuḷ* 'the god living in the forest', which the commentators explain as 'jungle deity' or more specifically as Koṟṟavai = Kālī. Similarly *Cila.* XI, 171 *kāṉ uṟai teyvam* 'deity living in the forest' which the commentator renders 'jungle deity', but which in view of the following canto xii may well refer to Koṟṟavai. However that may be, the contexts or the commentators do not suggest 'Māyōn' which one would expect in view of *Tolk.* 951. This may be considered as corroborative evidence for the relatively late date of *sūtra* 951.

136 This is the third occurrence of *mēya* along with Māyōn; we could equally well translate: 'where Māyōn manifests himself' (parallel to *Mat.* 591 (No. 1, previous chapter)). Could the same meaning be employed also in *sūtra* 1006 *Māyōn mēya maṉ* in the definition of the *pūvai nilai*, 'the king in whom Māyōn manifests himself'?

which Varuṇaṉ likes: these are called, in the order mentioned here, *mullai*, *kuṟiñci*, *marutam*, and *neytal*.[137]

This *sūtra* defines the poetic *nilam* 'space' or 'landscape', as one of the constituents of *mutal* (*sūtra* 950) '(external poetic) basis', viz. poetic space and time. Each region is defined through a major characteristic (forest, mountain, etc.) and through a god associated with it. There is another *sūtra* which defines the poetic function of these gods further: *Tolkāppiyam* 964 (=III, 1, 18):

Gods, food, animals, trees, birds, drums, occupation, types of lutes, tribes — these and other [elements typical of the individual landscape] are called 'karu'[138] (associative or evocative factors).[139]

Sūtras 951 and 964 together define that 'Māyōṉ' can evoke the whole poetic complex of *mullai*. As we have seen, *Naṟ*. 32 does not follow this rule, while only a portion of *Akan*. 175 does so.

As I have tried to show above, the theoretical principle as such is in complete agreement with the religious awareness of the classical period: the divine was visualized within the confines of empirical reality and the 'landscape'. But there it would apply only to Murukaṉ, because for Māyōṉ, not to speak of the Vedic gods Indra and Varuṇa, we have no such evidence. What is perhaps even more surprising is that *pālai*, one of the most ancient genres, is not even

[137] *Māyōṉ mēya kāṭ' uṟai ulakamum (1) Cēyōṉ mēya mai varai ulakamum (2) Vēntaṉ mēya tīm puṉal ulakamum (3) Varuṇaṉ mēya peru maṇal ulakamum (4) mullai kuṟiñci marutam neytal eṉa (5) ccoliya muṟaiyāṟ collavum paṭumē (6).* Bechert (1968/9) p. 36, referring to the Ceylonese deity Uppalavaṇṇa (or Upulvan), Skt. *utpala* 'blue water-lily' + *varṇa* 'colour, complexion', claims that this god was originally different from, and was only in the 14th-15th century AD identified with, Viṣṇu. He compares a passage in the *Mahāvaṃśa* (VII, 5, see Gombrich, 1971, p. 48, note 23), in which this god figures as one of four guardian deities of Ceylon, with *Tolk*. 951 (ibid., p. 38). 'Mēya' in the *sūtra* is taken to mean 'who presides over', and (p. 39) Upulvan is connected with Māyōṉ. While the material which has been discussed in 3.3 above (compare also 3.711) does not justify the distinction of Māyōṉ and Viṣṇu at least for the period with which we are concerned here, it may well be possible that *sūtra* 951 utilizes a much more ancient pattern of four guardian deities, of four regions. This does however not contradict the relatively late date suggested here for the *Tolk*., since we are dealing here with the projection of this possibly older pattern *upon poetics*. Compare Gombrich, pp. 176f.

[138] The term *karu* has been explained above p. 143.

[139] *teyvam uṇāvē mā maram puṭ paṟai* (1) *ceyti yāliṉ pakutiyoṭu tokaii* (2) *avvakai piṟavum karuv eṉa moḻipa*. Note here the Sanskritic 'teyvam' < Skt. *deva- daiva-*.

mentioned here. I think that all this points to a fairly late date[140] for these *sūtras*, a date after the flourishing bardic period, when the theoreticians began to analyse the oral bardic tradition and formulate in rules the mechanism of its poetic creation. A *karu* 'types of lutes' (in 964) bears the clear mark of a scholastic interest which could hardly have been operative during the classical period. I think this is equally borne out by the results obtained in the previous chapter. Hypothetically one could explain what has happened now by assuming that the scholastic spirit created patterns which, when projected back on to the existing poetry, showed certain empty slots, and that under the pressure of the system these *lacunae* had to be filled. The way in which Murukaṉ appeared in the poetic landscape would suggest to the theoreticians that he figures as a *karu* and that gods were a *karu* set. But no such gods could directly be discovered in the early poetry for the remaining four landscapes, and the set had to be filled artificially. For *mullai*, the 'region of the forests', the choice of Kṛṣṇa (as known in the *Kṛṣṇa-carita*) was natural and obvious, as we shall presently see.

3.42 *Mullai*

We may now briefly look at the 'landscape of jasmine', the *mullai tiṇai*, as it is constructed by the theory, and then also put into practice. The *uri (pporuḷ)*, emotional situation, is that of a wife waiting for the return of her husband who is abroad. *Sūtra* 960 styles this *iruttal*, which simply means 'to sit, to wait'. This definition is obviously rather vague and a fluctuation towards *neytal* or *pālai*, which also deal with the symptoms of a woman suffering in the separation from her lover, is only natural (see below). *Sūtra* 952[141] links this situation with (a) the rainy season and (b) the late evening.[142] The monsoon made it necessary for travellers, monks[143] or warriors to return home at the beginning of the rainy season. Thus it is not surprising that this season is connected in

[140] Zvelebil, by a different line of evidence, also postulates a date not earlier than the fifth century AD for Book III (which contains all the *sūtras* discussed here), see above p. 126.

[141] *kārum mālaiyum mullai.*

[142] In practice, the *vāṭai* 'northwind', is frequently linked with the rains, which in turn links the *mullai tiṇai* with the cold season.

[143] See the Buddhist *varṣâvāsa*, the 'rain retreat'.

particular with the waiting wife, as we find also in Prakrit[144] and Sanskrit lyrics.[145] This season, promising the imminent return of the husband, was particularly loaded with emotions for the lonely wife. *En miniature* the evening has the same emotional implications: after the day's work, other husbands would return home. And the unfriendly, cold north wind would remind the wife of the time when her companion would keep her warm. The fact that the *mullai* flower is said to blossom in early winter[146] may provide one of the 'natural' links between the emotional situation, the season, and the actual landscape (the *tiṇai*). The *mullai tiṇai* is the region of the forest, inhabited by cowherds (*sūtra* 967), the *āyar* (masc.) and *āycci* (fem.). From here we get many further poetic symbols: cows and bulls, milk and milk products, and naturally Kṛṣṇa the *Gopāla*. The type of village found in this region is called *pāṭi*, and thus 'Gokula' is translated *āyar pāṭi*.[147] As typical flowers and trees we find *mullai* (jasmine, *Jasminum sambac*); *tōnri* (Malabar glory lily, *gtoriosa superba*); *konrai* (*cassia fistula*); *kuruntu* (wild lime, *atalatia*); red *kāntaḷ* (tree producing *tōnri*); *kāyā* = *pūvai* (oblong cordate-leaved bilberry, *Memecylon malabaricum*); *kōṭal* (white variety of *kāntaḷ* = *tōnri*).

Perhaps I may be allowed to illustrate with one brief example how one of the outstanding classical *caṅkam* bards, the poetess Auvaiyār, handles the *mullai* landscape. The poem is No. 158 in the *Kuruntokai*:

> O raincloud, swelling in pregnancy, black!
> You are approaching with storm,
> thunder mixing with the cruel speedy lightning
> that dashes the hood of the serpent
> on the slope of the tall mountain.
> Have you none of your rich compassion
> for a woman without protection who deserves mercy?

[144] Compare Hāla's *Sattasaī*, e.g. 177, 539, 567, 623 and many more; see also the 'rāsaka' mentioned in Appendix IV, note 15.

[145] See, for example, *Subhāṣitaratnakośa*, Section X 'Rains' and Nos. 704, 708, 718, 728, and *Saduktikarṇâmṛta*, Section *Proṣitabhartṛkā* 'the woman whose husband is abroad' Nos. 736-775. Nor let us forget the *Meghadūta*.

[146] Varadarajan, 1969, p. 380.

[147] *Cila*. XVI, 46f *āyar pāṭiyiṉ Acōtai perr' eṭutta/pūvai pputu malar Vaṇṇaṉ* 'He of the colour of the fresh *pūvai*, who was born and brought up by Yaśodā in Gokula (= in the cowherd village)'. Compare XVII, 3.

Of a nature that makes even the Himalaya
of great renown tremble!
What is the meaning of all this?[148]

In truly classical style, one single *karu* is used here: raincloud; it evokes the rainy season, which has arrived before the woman's husband has returned. The reference to 'protection' is poignant: she is literally scared by the storm and its vehemence, but at the same time she suffers from the absence of her 'protector', her husband. Similarly 'pregnancy' would suggest her own state. Now 'mountain' is a *karu* of the *kuṟiñci* landscape, and in the present context it evokes the past pleasures of passionate love-making, which now through the absence of her lover appear destroyed as if by lightning. The reference in the context of *kuṟiñci* to the 'serpent' which is dashed to pieces by the storm may well be of a Freudian nature.

3.43 *Neṭunalvātai*

Now among the old songs in the *Pattuppāṭṭu*, we find a poem entitled *Neṭunalvātai* 'The Long Strong Northwind' which is attributed to the poet Nakkīraṉār. This song presents some problems of classification, but it seems safe to speak of a strong *mullai* flavour, if not of a *mullai* poem itself.[149] The general theme of the poem is the lonely state of a wife who awaits the return of her husband who is on a military mission. Thus we find typical phrases like '(a lady) separated from her lover'[150] or 'forsaken by her "protector" (=husband)'[151]. Lines 1-35 give a description of the cold season and the northwind, where (in line 2) we hear of the 'rain'.[152] Line 3 mentions the *kōvalar* 'cowherds', and 4 *ēṟ' uṭai nirai* 'herd of cows along with a bull'. Evening (*mālai*) is described

[148] *neṭu varai maruṅkiṟ pāmpu paṭav iṭikkum/kaṭu vicaiy urumiṉ kaḷaru kural aḷaii/kkāloṭu vanta kamaṅ cūṉ mā maḻai/ār aḷiy ilaiyō nīyē pēr icai/Imayamum tuḷakkum paṇpiṉai/tuṇaiy ilar aḷiyar peṇṭir iṟt' evaṉē/.*

[149] The modern commentator (p. 11) categorizes it as *pālai*, because it depicts 'pirital' (separation) which according to *sūtra* 960 is the *uri* of *pālai*. But this is a feeble argument indeed, because all the typical *pālai karus* are absent; after all, the *mullai uri* is not possible unless 'separation' is the basic situation.

[150] *kātalar ppirintōr* 71.

[151] *tuṇai tuṟantu* 137.

[152] *peyal*, also mentioned e.g. in line 71.

in lines 36-44, where in line 40 a variety of jasmine is mentioned (*pittikam*). The *mullai* itself is mentioned in 130. Line 129 refers to the forest (*kāṉam*), as the place where the *mullai* flower grows. I think there can hardly be any doubt that the *mullai* genre has influenced the song heavily.

The song is highly original,[153] probably among the best of heroic poetry. The very difficulty of classification, along with its originality, would speak in favour of an early date. Now in lines 167f we find the following prayer: 'That my bitter, unbearable pain be removed, grant him victory and let him complete his task now, please, O Mother!' [154]

Now the 'mother' prayed to here is in all likelihood the ancient Tamil goddess of victory, Koṟṟavai.[155] As we have seen, the *Tolk.* strangely enough has not made any provision for her in the *akattiṇai.* But then I have postulated that this rule belongs to a later period. If we maintain this assumption, another song found in the *Pattuppāṭṭu*, called the *Mullaippāṭṭu* 'The song about the Jasmine Landscape', which is attributed to Ṉappūtaṉār 'the son of the gold-merchant of Pukār', can be evaluated in this light.

3.44 *Mullaippāṭṭu*

Scholars like Zvelebil have placed this song in the post-classical period, say the fifth century AD, which would make it contemporary with the 'academic' tendencies betrayed by the *Tolkāppiyam* III.[156] In some respects, the song is almost a carbon copy of the *Neṭunalvāṭai*, but we find neither any of the 'liberties' (in relation to the scholastic 'rules') nor the originality and imagination of the other poem. Everything is 'correct' in this song, in strict accordance with the theory found in *Tolk.* III. Moreover, it seems that it is actually modelled upon the *Neṭ.*, since not only is the general content the same, but also individual passages derive directly from the classical song.[157] *Neṭ.* only suggests the return of the husband;

153 For a literary appreciation see Kailasapathy, 1968, pp. 40-42.

154 *iṉṉā arum paṭar tīra, viṟa ṟantu* (167) *iṉṉē muṭika til, amma*! — On the particle *til* expressing a wish, see *Tolk.* II, 7, 5 (= 738).

155 Thus the commentators.

156 Being the only work in the *corpus* attributed to this poet, the song is not related by tradition to the ancient classical period.

157 So we may compare the simple *nellu malarun tūuy kkai toḻutu* 'scattering rice

this — according to the general spirit of Indian poetics — was felt not to be enough; so *Mul.* provides a clear 'happy ending' with lines 89-103. This passage is studded with *mullai karus*; almost every line contains one: *kāyā* (93), *konrai* (94), *kōṭal* (95), *tōnri* (96), *kāṉam* 'forest' (97), *varaku* 'common millet' (98), *māṉ* 'deer' (99), *maḻai* 'rain' (100), *kāṭu* 'forest' (101), as also the theme 'the hero urges on the horse to arrive home quickly' (102-3).

I think this passage is typical of the poem: it is an *academic* creation, which meticulously observes the poetic rules now formulated; it derives its inspiration from the *Neṭ.*, but alters it to conform to the theory, and provides a more or less complete set of *mullai karus*. In that sense, it cannot be a song created against the background of a bardic convention, but must be looked upon as a 'grammatical exercise' designed to illustrate *all the rules and symbols* in one piece.

Thus it is not surprising that the prayer to Korravai has been eliminated, and Māyōṉ introduced as the 'correct' *karu*. We find the reference in the opening passage, in a piece of highly involved imagery. I furnish here a free translation of lines 1-23 and 80-84, which constitute the *akam* portion of the song.[158]

In the brief and gloomy evening,
heavy rains poured down
from fast-travelling high clouds
which had drunk from the roaring cool ocean,
and rising with a turn to the right
had taken to the mountain peaks —
resembling Māl who raised himself and
stretched out across the far-flung world,
so that the water dripped from his broad hands
which clasp the Lady (Lakṣmī),
who is branded with the discus
and the right-wheeled conch.[159] (1-6)

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and flowers, and worshipping "with the hands (folded)"' in *Neṭ.* 43 with the elaborate: *nelloṭu* (8) *nāḻi koṇṭa naṟuvī mullai* (9) *arump' aviḻ alari iūuy kkai toḻutu* (10) in *Mul.* 'scattering rice, the fragrant *mullai* with "tubular vessels", and the oleander with buds opening, and worshipping with their hands (folded)'. We have here a typical example of how the poet misses no chance to add *mullai karus*.

158 The Tamil text of lines 1-23 is printed in Kailasapathy, 1968, pp. 147-52 and is not provided here; the author there shows how the phraseology of these lines derives from the old bardic style.

159 *poṟitta mātāṅku taṭakkai* in line 2 is quite confusing; I follow the commentator

The comparison is of a threefold nature: the blackness of the clouds and of Kṛṣṇa, their encompassing the world and his taking possession of the world as Vāmana, their raining and his shedding the water through which Bali had confirmed the gift of the piece of land. Again, this very elaborate simile indicates a later date.

Some old wise women
went to the outskirts
of the well-fortified ancient village.
While the cluster of bees
[provided] lute music with their humming,
they scattered rice,
fragrant *mullai* flowers with tubular vessels,
and blossoming buds of oleander;
with hands [folded] they worshipped
and waited for a chance word [as omen]. (7-11)

'A cowherd girl,
seeing a young calf
tethered to a short rope
restless in its anxiety [for its mother to return],
put her hand on its trembling shoulder
and stroked it. She said:
"Your mother will presently return,
when the cowherds with painful sticks in their hands drive her home."
These happy words [=good omen] of a good person have we heard.
(12-17)

Although they demonstrated to her
time and again:

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in separating *mā* 'treasure, Lakṣmī' and *tāṅku* 'clasping' and take *poṟitta* as *peyareccam* with *mā contra* Kailasapathy. My justification for this rendering are parallel expressions in Periyâḻvār, where the *cakra* and the conch appear as the 'property sign' or branded mark of Kṛṣṇa. The *karutturai* takes it as *peyareccam* with *kai* which to me seems somewhat forced syntactically, although the idea itself is not altogether impossible on the basis of Periyâḻvār TM I, 2, 12 quoted by him *(nēmiyum caṅku nilāviya kai* 'the hand in which the disc and the conch rest'). Pâḻ TM I, 1, 6 (*poṟi*), V, 4, 1 (*poṟi*), and V, 2, 8 are certainly much closer phraseological parallels. Naccinārkkiniyar rearranges the words, so that we would have to read: '. . hands holding the discus . . . Māl marked with Wealth (= Śrī)'; but such manipulation of the word order is not really permissible. If my interpretation of *poṟitta* were correct, the song may have to be dated even later than the fifth century, say the seventh or eighth century AD.

'It will thus certainly become true
that your husband will return home
after completing the campaign of his king
–the plundering of the hostile army–. (...)
You of black complexion!
Give up your grief, your worry!'
she did not see [hope in this]
and her painted flower-like eyes, red from weeping,
shed the pearls of distress. (18-23)

Now the poem turns to a description of the woman's husband's war-camp and his activities there. Then in lines 80-88, we can turn back to the palace, where she is spending a sleepless night in agony. The following four lines describe her emotional state:

She suffers great pain, and in her grief, losing her self-control, she sends her heart as messenger [to him]; she ponders for a long time, and comforts herself, and rearranges her slipping bracelets; she is caught by passionate love [and swoons], and slowly comes to; she shakes like a peahen struck by an arrow, and her ornaments slip off . . . (80-84)[160]

By now, I think it is not necessary any more to list the various *karus* contained in the passages. But we may note that the emotional symptoms described here are violent enough to move over into the *neytal tiṇai*.

This may suffice to illustrate how the *mullai tiṇai* evolved through the academicians. The rules in the *Tolk*. and their practical application in the *Mul*. show the treatment of *mullai* as it had become standardized. This implies a definite further stage in the development of Māyōṉ in Southern culture. Māyōṉ is now given a well-defined position in the general frame of reference of *akam* poetry, as a *karu* of *mullai*. While Māyōṉ figured only on the fringe of the poetic awareness (and the ideology) of the old bards, it was due to the efforts of the theoreticians not only that the old associative structure of *akam* was taken into a new age, but also that Māyōṉ found an integral part in it. For the further history of Māyōṉ we can

[160] *tuyar uḷantu (80) neñc' ārṟu ppaṭutta niṟai tapu pulampoṭu (81) nīṭu niṉaintu tēṟṟiyum ōṭu vaḷai tiruttiyum (82) maiyal koṇṭum oyy eṉav uyirttum (83) ēv' uṟu maññaiyi ṉaṭuṅkiy iḷai nekiḷntu. . . . (84).*

assume that this standardized poetic theory with its ideological implications was of importance.[160a]

We may now turn to later *caṅkam* works, belonging to the period of the renaissance, where we shall encounter for the first time Kṛṣṇa material that is of direct concern for the present study.

3.5 Māyōn in the works of the Tamil renaissance

3.51 *Introduction*

While up to the fifth century AD references to Māyōn remain very scarce (only ten have been discussed in the previous two chapters), during the following three centuries or so the situation changes considerably, since a number of different literary works refer to him quite frequently. From among these texts, one — the *Paripāṭal* — can be separated for the purpose of our study, and it will be dealt with below (3.6). Its theology of Māl, and its temple-oriented religion, distinguish it from the remaining works which, with Tamil folk culture as their background, orientate themselves towards the classical *caṅkam* tradition. Thus the present chapter will analyse the treatment of the Māyōn theme in three such works: the epic *Cilappatikāram* which dedicates one canto (the *Āycciyarkuravai*) to Kṛṣṇaite themes, the *Kalittokai* which is a collection of poems in 'rustic' style with many allusions to Kṛṣṇa, and a late poem in the classical anthology *Akanāṉūṟu*.

So far Māyōn's connection with the *akattiṇai* has been restricted to a single rule in a grammar of poetics, two older poems which do not conform to that rule, and one which follows it in a very academic manner. Such labels as 'academic' and 'grammatical' might suggest a last stage in the poetic history before its total decline; but the works from which we shall draw the material for the present chapter demonstrate a remarkable vitality and novel liveliness. Although it is roughly during this same period that the

[160a] Maturai Kaṇṇaṉ Kūttaṉār is the author of the *Kārnārpatu*, for which Zvelebil suggests the 5th or 6th century AD as the date of its composition. Describing in 40 *veṇpā* stanzas the love of a 'hero' and 'heroine' in the *mullai* landscape, it concludes with a stanza in praise of Tirumāl. Although the actual love-poems ignore Māyōn, it is significant that at least through the last stanza a *religious* facet appears here. This is then carried much further by Nammāḻvār, each stanza of his TVir refers to Māyōn. See Zvelebil, 1975, p. 118, on the *Kārnārpatu*.

notion of an 'academy' (this is the meaning of '*caṅkam*') is documented for the first time,[161] much of this new poetry is hardly 'academic', but extremely fresh and popular. This is my reason for speaking of a Tamil 'renaissance' which these works illustrate. As we shall see, this literary renaissance has had recourse to previously unexplored *popular* segments of Tamil culture (folk songs, village religion, popular customs, 'vulgarism', etc.), and has placed it under the programme of '*caṅkam*' poetry, thereby hallowing its own achievements through association with the classical past.

Now we know from *Mat.* 590ff[162] that Kṛṣṇa was known to popular strata in Maturai already in the third century AD and as the following pages will amply demonstrate, such strata developed from this knowledge myths and customs peculiarly Kṛṣṇaite.[163] This meant that the connection of Māyōṉ with the *akattiṇai* which had been on the whole theoretical, now encountered and joined with a different Kṛṣṇaite complex, viz. that which existed in that popular segment resorted to by the renaissance literati. However, the works to be discussed at present did not altogether succeed in fusing the two very different approaches to Māyōṉ, and certain incongruous features bear witness to this. We could describe the poetic landscape encountered in these works as a 'quasi-*mullait-tiṇai*', which means that all the external poetic paraphernalia (*karus*, etc.) are employed in the description of Kṛṣṇa's rustic *amours*, while the *uri*, the emotional situation, typical of *mullai* (separation) had little internal connection with these *amours*.

It may be possible to link the literary renaissance with the political developments which took place in the South during roughly the same period. The sixth century AD witnessed the re-emergence of the Pāṇṭiya kingdom in Maturai (the alleged seat of the *caṅkam*).[164] The material analysed in this chapter and the next belongs exclusively to Maturai, and thus it may not be too far-fetched to cor-

[161] See Zvelebil, 1973, pp. 59f.

[162] See above 3.3, No. **1**.

[163] It would be a mistake to interpret the much more important rôle of Māyōṉ in these later works as the direct result of *recent* imports of Kṛṣṇaite material into the South. Although this may have played some rôle, the kind of myths which are met at this later date shows quite clearly that they are the result of intensive Tamil reworkings of the Northern models, and thus must have been introduced into the South at an earlier date. For details see below 3.524.

[164] Nilakanta Sastri (e.g., 1966, p. 152) suggests AD 590-620 as the period for the first of these Pāṇṭiya kings, Kaṭuṅkōṉ.

relate Tamil renaissance and the treatment of Māyōn in the works belonging to it with the reawakening of political identity in the Pāṇṭiyan South.[165] We must also keep in mind that at the fringe of the classical Tamiḻ-nāṭu, in Kāñcīpuram, a second imperial power arose during the sixth century, the Pallavas; it was in their realm that the Early Āḻvārs flourished.

As in certain (somewhat later) poems from Bengal,[166] Kṛṣṇa is envisaged in the present works within the confines of the real life of herdsmen. Now we hear frequently about his relations with the *gopīs*, but their encounter takes place in circumstances which, as I shall try to show, are but mythical projections of real life events. Folk religion had developed three myths about Kṛṣṇa and the *gopīs* which as such are unknown to earlier or contemporary Northern texts: the 'bullfight', the *kuravai* dance,[167] and the 'breaking of the *kuruntu* tree'.[168] Moreover we hear of a favourite *gopī* of Kṛṣṇa called Piṉṉai. Since the mythological themes occur only as accidental allusions or in highly formalized non-mythical codes, and since these themes must be the result of undocumented earlier developments in the South — knowledge of all this being taken for granted by the poets — to unravel the various strands, layers, and codes which are combined in any given poetic work will be a difficult task. While the 'breaking of the *kuruntu* tree' can be discussed *ad locum* (in 3.55), the very intricate problem of reconstructing the bullfight and *kuravai*, which are alluded to in the *Cila.* and *Kali.*, has been referred to Appendices VIII and IX.[169] These many different and separate analyses will ultimately suggest that popular segments of Tamil society had evolved a typically Southern Kṛṣṇaism by the sixth century or so, with peculiar myths and religious attitudes, and that this form of Kṛṣṇaism stood in contrast not only to the spirit of the Tirumāl hymns in the *Paripāṭal*, but also to the

[165] I would not wish to press this correlation to the extent of postulating that all the works to be discussed here are as late as the sixth or seventh century, when Pāṇṭiya power was fully restored. Earlier gradual developments, both political and literary, must have taken place.

[166] See poems S 26-30 mentioned in 2.51 above; compare also Figure I.

[167] Edholm/Suneson (1972) collected a number of references to the bullfight, *kuravai* (and Piṉṉai), both as myth and as real custom. But particularly on the last-mentioned two points, their observations are not always correct.

[168] Another, very obscure myth is the *kuṭa-kkūttu*. See on this note 206 below.

[169] The identity of 'Piṉṉai', who is also mentioned in this context, will be discussed further in 3.712 below.

treatment of Māyōṉ in the formulated *akattinai* conventions (and projected on folk Kṛṣṇaism by the renaissance literati). These suggestions help us to identify separate facets in the background of the Ālvārs, and tensions which had to result from an encounter of these separate facets.

3.52 *The* Āycciyarkuravai *of the* Cilappatikāram

3.521 *Introduction*

The *Cilappatikāram*, 'The Epic about the Anklet'[170] is said to be the work of 'His Reverence the Prince' (*iḷaṅ kō aṭikaḷ*)[171] which can hardly be considered to be a proper name. This prince is said to have been a Jain monk;[172] it is certainly true that the epic betrays a strong Jain flavour (expressed, for example, in the message implied in the epic, the working out of past *karma*). It is worth keeping this possible Jain character in mind for the interpretation of the Māyōṉ material, but at the same time, both literary style and basic story material are purely Tamil. The 'date' of the epic has been discussed quite intensively, but all that need (or can) be said here is that the work probably has its roots in the third century AD and developed until the sixth century or even later, taking in many additions, revisions, and alterations.[173] It is difficult indeed to decide whether

[170] *Atikāram* < Skt. *adhikāra* 'topic, subject matter; section of a book'. In Tamil, the word seems to have acquired the additional meaning of 'literary work' (*Piṉ.*). *Cilappu*, more common *cilampu*, is 'anklet'.

[171] The honorific *aṭikaḷ*, literally 'feet', corresponds in meaning to Skt. *guru* ('teacher, elder, person of respect', etc.) The MTL says that in this epic it means 'sage or ascetic', but note that in the *Periyapurāṇam* the hyper-plural *aṭikaṇmār* is said to mean 'priests, esp. of the Jainas'. Also for the *Cila.* a Jain connotation is likely — see the following note.

[172] One of the reasons for this assumption must have been the *aṭikaḷ*; other evidence is seen, for example, in lines 1f of the spurious *Patikam* that figures as an introduction to the epic: *aracu turan̲t' iruntа . . . cēral iḷaṅ kō* 'the Cēra prince who had given up royal power and was there (= on that mountain, but comm: "and sat there performing *tapas*")'. Ramachandra Dikshitar (1939, pp. 68f) regards the author as a 'follower . . . of Hinduism in its broader sense'. Nevertheless the modern commentator, following the general trend today in South Indian scholarship, makes him a Śaiva, which is much less plausible.

[173] Zvelebil (1973, pp. 175, 179) speaks of a 'final recension' which he places in the fifth or sixth century AD. There also references to the extensive literature dealing with the problems of date, authenticity of Book III (Vañci), etc., will be found.

any of the ancient material has been preserved verbatim, or only in the form of motifs, themes, etc.

The epic[174] relates the story of the merchant Kōvalaṉ and his wife Kaṇṇaki. Kōvalaṉ, living in the Cōḻa capital Pukār, gets involved with the prostitute Mātavi, and when he has squandered away his wealth on her, he sets out with his wife for Maturai to make a new start. While selling an anklet of Kaṇṇaki in the town, he is falsely accused of having stolen it from the queen, and is executed without trial. Kaṇṇaki, furious with rage, tears off one of her breasts, punishes the credulous king who did not investigate the charge brought against Kōvalaṉ, and sets the whole town ablaze. The final part of the epic describes the deification of Kaṇṇaki, and the worship offered to her by the Cēra king.

The work is divided into 30 cantos (varying in length between 53 and 268 lines, totalling 5,300 lines) which fall into three books, named after the three ancient Tamil capitals: *Pukār* (Cōḻa) 1-10, *Maturai* (Pāṇḍiya) 11-23, and *Vañci* (Cēra) 24-30. This division corresponds to the subject matter of the cantos: Pukār is the place of Kōvalaṉ's *amours*, the Pāṇḍiya executes him in Maturai, and the Cēra deifies Kaṇṇaki. Moreover, the epic narrative is structured according to the five *akattiṇai:* the book of Pukār deals with Kaṇṇaki's agony caused by Kōvalaṉ's affair with Mātavi (the typical *marutam* theme), and the latter's love-making on the sea-shore (the *neytal* region); 'Maturai' sees Kōvalaṉ and Kaṇṇaki 'eloping' (from their ruin in Pukār) and travelling through wild

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In § 1922 (vol. II p. 311) of *L'Inde classique* we read similarly: '. . . entre le IIIe et le VIIe siécle. Populaire, ce poème a été remanié et augmenté par la suite.' Ramachandra Dikshitar, 1939, p. 10, maintains a pre-Pallava date for the whole *Cila*. In Appendix X I shall discuss three stanzas of canto 17 which in my opinion belong to a date after the sixth century.

174 An English translation of the work, which does not really go beyond the interpretation of the commentators, was made by Ramachandra Dikshitar (1939). A. Daniélou produced first in French (1961) and then in English (1965) something that is best styled a 'free paraphrase'; it is incomplete, without scholarly value, and distorts many passages. Short characterizations of the epic are found, for example, in Schomerus (in Glasenapp, 1961), pp. 385-8; 392f; *L'Inde classique*, vol. II, §§ 1921f; Zvelebil, 1973, pp. 172-84, where extensive bibliographies are given. Ramachandra Dikshitar, 1937-8, pp. 268-71, which discusses a few Māyōṉ references mainly in the *Cilappatikāram*, is very limited in scope and frequently misleading: it is ignored here. On the historical background to the cult of goddess Kaṇṇaki Pattiṉi see Zvelebil, 1973, pp. 172ff; also Ramachandra Dikshitar, 1939, pp. 370-3.

country (the typical *pālai* themes), and then Kaṇṇaki waiting among cowherdesses for the return of Kōvalaṉ from the town Maturai (the classical *mullai* situation); in 'Vañci' the major events take place on the hills (the region of *kuṟiñci*) where Kaṇṇaki is reunited with Kōvalaṉ who takes her into heaven. These features suffice to show the amount of 'academic' structuring that has been imposed on the epic. Moreover, in a number of places the epic narrative is interrupted by purely lyrical cantos which dwell on the classical *akam* themes: *marutam* and *neytal* in canto 7, *pālai* in 12 (the *Vēṭṭuvavari* 'Songs of the Hunters'), *mullai* in 17 (the *Āycciyar-kuravai* 'Dance of the Cowherdesses') which will be the centre of our analysis, and *kuṟiñci* in 24. These *akam* interludes consist of individual poems, held together by 'plots' that can only be guessed; at the same time, these cantos were particularly exposed to later additions.

3.522 *Canto 17 : the* Āycciyarkuravai

Kōvalaṉ has gone into the town of Maturai to sell one of Kaṇṇaki's anklets (from which the name of the epic is derived); he has left his wife in the protection of the old cowherd woman Mātari, who lives in a herdsmen's village at the outskirts of that town. While the disaster takes place in Maturai, canto 17, 'The Dance of the Cowherdesses', speaks about these cowherd women in the village. I furnish an extensive translation of this canto.[175]

The canto begins with ten lines in the epic metre which provide the setting.

1] When the drum [to wake up the king] in the morning was beaten with great clamour in the palace of the Pāṇṭiya king, (...) the old cowherd woman [Mātari] appeared and said: 'Therefore it is our turn today to [provide the palace with] ghee!' She called her daughter Aiyai, and took the churning rope and stick.

The first poem now describes a number of bad omens which the women encounter when they try to make the butter.

2] The milk has not curdled in the pot;
the bull with the big hump sheds tears from his fine eyes;
something [evil] will happen. (1)

[175] For the Tamil text see Appendix VII, 1); on the poems 12] to 14] see Appendix X.

The fragrant butter in the vessel [hanging from the ceiling] does not liquefy;
the languid lambs do not jump about and frisk;
something [evil] will happen. (2)
The cows of four udders stand shivering and low;
the big bell [on the bull's neck] has fallen to the ground;
something [evil] will happen. (3)

(The following is a prose passage :)[176]

3] 'The milk has not curdled in the pot (...) Something evil will happen!' [Mātari] spoke thus, and looking at her daughter without confusion in her mind said: 'Let us dance the *kuravai* which Māyavaṉ and his elder brother danced along with Piññai[177] of long spear-like eyes, [which is] among the dances of the *Bālacaritā* that were danced by him on the bull-yard in the Cowherd-Village (=Gokula); thus also Kaṇṇaki, a jewel among the women on earth, may see it.' Indeed it [=the dance] was a prayer that the [impending] evil might depart from the cows and calves.

The following poem is only by reference to parallels in the *Kalittokai* and the Early Āḻvārs comprehensible. There we see that the *kuravai* dance follows — as its conclusion — the 'bullfight', and this both as *akam* theme and as Kṛṣṇa myth. At this stage, an extract from the poem will suffice.

4] This girl with a garland of fragrant flowers
will love him who attacks-and-subdues
without fear the fury of the black (bull)! (1)[178]

This theme of the 'bull competition' is not developed further here, and we turn immediately to the actual *kuravai* dance.

176 Probably the oldest prose passage in Tamil literature and presumably genuine, although one could argue that it is a commentator's gloss which got into the text. See Asher 1972, p. 128, and compare note 251 below.

177 On the identity of Piṉṉai (as she is commonly known) see below 3.712. Though said to be Rādhā (e.g., Ramachandra Dikshitar 1937-38, p. 269) all available evidence points in another direction.

178 Stanzas 2 to 7, numbered here 5], repeat the pattern for other girls and for bulls of different colours.

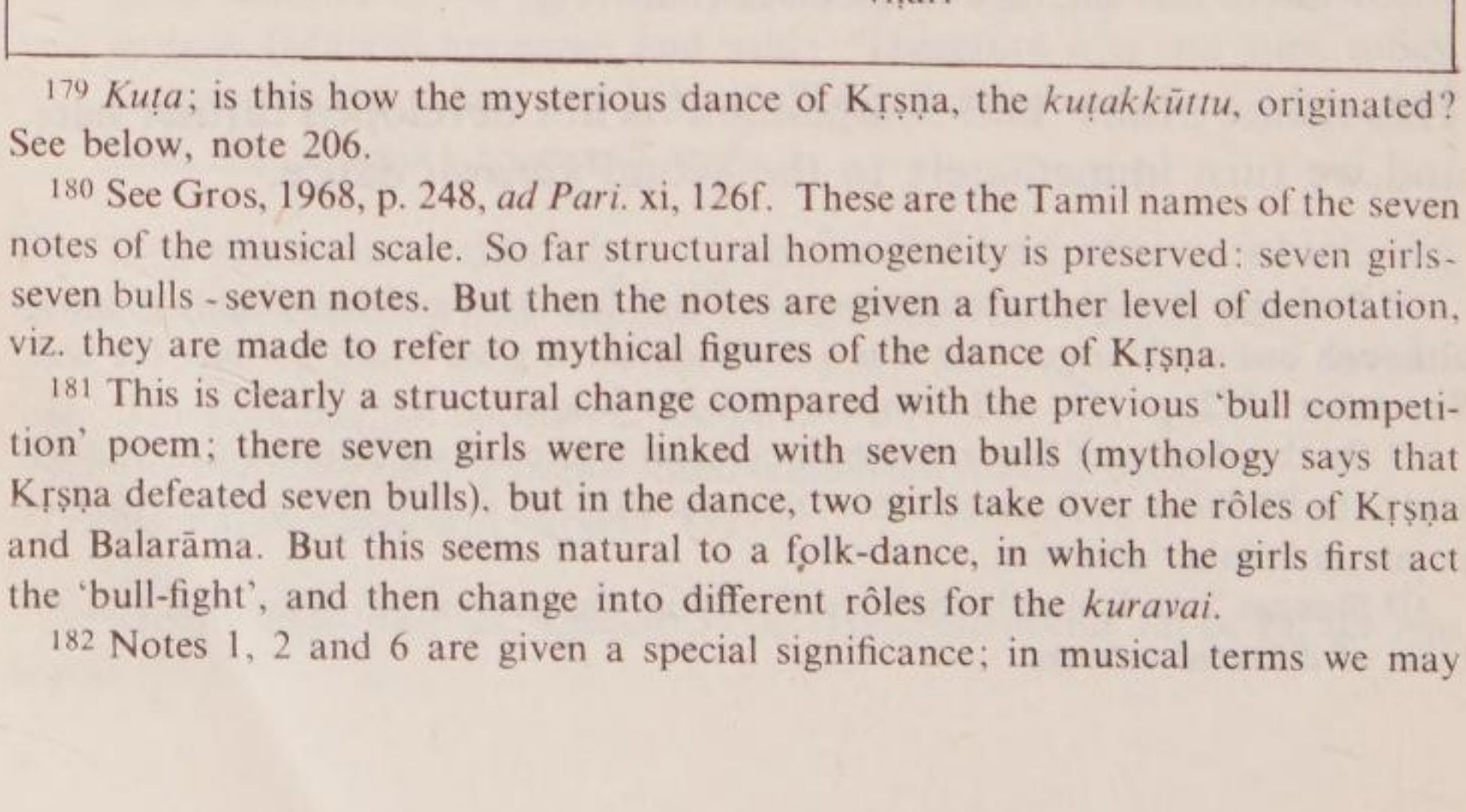
6] In this manner the bulls had been designated in the stable [as the bulls which a man would have to subdue in order to obtain the respective girl], and were raised by the seven young garlanded girls. With these words addressed to her daughter, the old cowherd woman made (the girls) stand in the order established since antiquity; while distributing the rôles [they were to play], she gave them these names.

She began in the west[179] and then proceeded according to their order: *kural*, *tuttam*, *kaikkiḷai*, *uḷai*, *iḷi*, *viḷari*, and *tāram*.[180] These are the names required for the girls with locks in which are blossoming flowers. (a)

She called *kural* Māyavaṉ[181], *iḷi* 'the cowherd who is of white complexion and full of strength' (Balarāma); she said that the unique *tuttam* was to be Piṉṉai the cowherd's daughter, and named the other girls according to the ancient rules and order.[182](b)

A drawing might illustrate the arrangement of the dance as described here in these lines.

TABLE VII



179 *Kuṭa*; is this how the mysterious dance of Kṛṣṇa, the *kuṭakkūttu*, originated? See below, note 206.

180 See Gros, 1968, p. 248, *ad Pari.* xi, 126f. These are the Tamil names of the seven notes of the musical scale. So far structural homogeneity is preserved: seven girls-seven bulls - seven notes. But then the notes are given a further level of denotation, viz. they are made to refer to mythical figures of the dance of Kṛṣṇa.

181 This is clearly a structural change compared with the previous 'bull competition' poem; there seven girls were linked with seven bulls (mythology says that Kṛṣṇa defeated seven bulls). but in the dance, two girls take over the rôles of Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma. But this seems natural to a folk-dance, in which the girls first act the 'bull-fight', and then change into different rôles for the *kuravai*.

182 Notes 1, 2 and 6 are given a special significance; in musical terms we may

The cowherd woman [Mātari] said: 'Ai! This is indeed our Pinnai who with her hands that (wear) rich bangles will start the 'authentic' *kuravai* by placing a *tulsī* garland with humming bees on Māyavan — so that He who had measured the famous world does not look at Śrī on his chest!' (d)

In the light of the *Kalittokai*, this would mean that the bullfight is over, and Pinnai, whose bull(s) Kṛṣṇa has defeated, puts a garland on her future husband, to start the *kuravai* dance with him in celebration.

7] Of these (girls) who took each other by the hand in a crab-like manner and formed a circle in the *cennilai* posture, and paying close attention to the rhythm of the dance they danced at that time (...), *kural* addressed *kiḷai*: 'Let us sing the beautiful *mullai* melody[184] for Him who broke the *kuruntu* tree in the vast backyard!'[185] (...) (a)
Then she started to sing about Pinrai: (...) (b)

8]a 'Friend, would we not hear the sweet flute of the *konrai*[186] in His mouth, when he comes [home] today with our herds of cows,[187] — Māyavan who with the calf[188] as his club made the fruits fall down? (1)
Friends! Would we not hear the sweet flute of the *āmpal*[189] in His mouth, when he comes [home] among our cows here, of Māyavan who churned the ocean with the snake as churning rope?[190] (2)

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well be dealing with something related to the *sā* (= 1), the *vādī* (= 6), and *saṃvādī* (= 2) which constitute in Hindustani music the basic features of a *rāg*. In 7] (b), four notes are further specified according to their pitch (?): (1) and (6) are said to be *manda* (*komal?*), (2) *balin* (*tīvra?*) and (5) *sama* (*śuddha?*). I leave it to the musicologist to figure out the *rāg* that this might suggest.

183 The fifth, *kural* to *iḷi*, is called *kiḷai*, 'harmonious chord', see Gros *loc. cit.* *Kiḷai* occurs in 7] line 4, which some old commentators interpret as (2) *tuttam*, see *ad locum* p. 407.

184 The *rāg* associated with *mullai* songs.

185 On this myth see 3.55.

186 One of the *mullai* flowers.

187 Very vague *mullai uri* suggestion: the *gopīs* long for the return of Kṛṣṇa in the evening.

188 Calf - Dhenuka, the demon whom Kṛṣṇa threw up into a tree.

189 Lotus or water-lily. On *konrai tīn kulal* and *āmpal an tīn kulal* see *Kali.* 106, 3 and 108, 62 respectively.

190 Reference to the myth of Viṣṇu's churning the milk-ocean with the help of the serpent Vāsukī.

Friends! Would we not hear the sweet flute of the *mullai* in His mouth, when he comes [home] among our cows during daytime, of Māyavaṉ who broke the *kuruntu* tree which stood in the beautiful grove in the backyard?' (3)

8]b '[Now] let us sing about the beautiful complexion of Piṉṉai who danced with Him, the Lord of the shores of the Yamunā (= Toḻuṉai).

8]c 'Shall we praise the beauty of Him who hid away the dresses of [the *gopīs*] who walk about with a dancing step, with waists [so thin that it seems] they will break, or shall we praise the face of soft fragrant splendour which expressed grief, so that he who had hidden the dresses became grieved himself? (1)
Shall we praise the perfection of her who stole the heart of Him who on the banks of the Yamunā had done mischief, or shall we praise the beauty of him who had done mischief to the bracelets[191] and to the perfection of her who stole his heart? (2)
Shall we praise the face of her, the girl, who hid her face behind her hand, when she had lost her bracelet[191] and her garments, or shall we praise the beauty of him who pined and languished when he saw the face of her who had hidden it behind her hands?' (3)

After these three stanzas that describe the erotic behaviour of Kṛṣṇa and Piṉṉai, 9] refers to Nārada playing his lute to accompany Piññai (in (a); 'Piṉṉai' in (b)) in her dance with Māyavaṉ.[192] The next section is entitled 'Praise of the Dancers', although 8] (b) and (c) have already treated this theme.[193] Here the girls sing in general terms about the *gopīs'* dance.

10] How splendid is the *kuravai*, which is danced in the courtyard smeared with cowdung, by Māyavaṉ along with his elder brother, and along with Piṉṉai whose hands adorn fine lined bracelets, while the flower-garlands fall out of the locks of the little girls of the cowherds, and while

[191] A typical poetic idiom; love-sickness makes a girl become so emaciated that her bangles slip off her wrist and she 'loses' them.

[192] In (a) Nārada plays a style derived from the Vedas, while in (b) he employs the music of the *kuyiluvar* (instrumental musicians). The parallelism of the two stanzas would speak in favour of the assumption of two styles of music, religious (note the Veda!) and secular.

[193] As we shall see below in the *Kalittokai*, this praise of the dancers is a characteristic feature of the *kuravai* described in lyric poetry.

they worship and praise Yaśodā, stamping with their feet the rhythm that the beautiful bracelets beat![194]

The canto concludes with a final prayer of the cowherd women.

15] 'May the god[195] who has been extolled in the *kuravai* which we have thus danced remove the afflictions suffered by the cows!
May the drum of the Pāṇṭiya king . . . who wears on his own head the crown of the king of gods armed with the victorious thunderbolt[196] — may this drum, beaten with the stick, bring about day by day the victory over his enemies, so that all other kings take fright.'

This passage, again in epic metre, referring to the Pāṇṭiya king and to Māyōṉ, acts with 1] as a frame to the lyrical songs contained in this canto.

Although these songs are not connected by any epic passages explaining to us the 'plot' of the dance, at least the general development of the theme treated appears to be fairly clear.[197] The cowherdesses have to provide ghee for the palace of the Pāṇṭiya king, but a number of bad omens indicate imminent disaster. They decide to dance the *kuravai*, a reproduction of Kṛṣṇa's mythical dance with the *gopīs*, to ward off the evil. Strangely enough, their dance begins with an obscure reference to the bullfight involving seven girls and seven corresponding bulls (4] to 6]). Then the structure becomes more transparent: these seven girls take on two rôles each: that of the seven notes of the musical scale, and that of the participants in Kṛṣṇa's mythical dance (viz. Kṛṣṇa, Balarāma, Piṉṉai, and four *gopīs*). They are arranged in a circle, and the actual dance begins when 'Piṉṉai' places a *tulsī* garland around 'Kṛṣṇa's' neck to honour her future husband who has been victorious in the bullfight. The girl acting as Kṛṣṇa addresses the girl playing

194 The printed editions have three further poems, viz. 12] to 14] along with three lines of introduction, 11]. These will be discussed in Appendix X.

195 That is Māyōṉ; see below, 3.533, for similar concluding passages to the *kuravai* that refer to Māyōṉ and the Pāṇṭiya.

196 Viz. Indra. A temple of Indra is mentioned, for example, in *Puṟa.* 241, 3.

197 Obviously many details have to remain obscure. The printed editions provide headings for each of the sections (which I have numbered 1] to 15]), but neither does there exist any uniformity (for example heading of 5], *suṭṭu*, is inserted into the text itself in the 1920 edition), nor are these headings themselves very clear. These details concern mainly choreographical, musical, and poetical matters.

Balarāma and tells her to begin singing sōngs in praise of Kṛṣṇa and Pinnai which belong to the *mullai* landscape (till 7] (b)). Song 8] a) appears to be put into the mouths of the mythical *gopīs*, who encourage each other to listen to Kṛṣṇa's flute when he comes home in the evening from herding the cows. Similarly, the (epic) cowherdesses want to sing Pinnai's praise (in 8] (b)) which is expressed in the song 8] (c), presumably again put into the mouths of mythical *gopīs*. Songs 9] and 10] are again the words of the epic milkmaids, who describe the mythical dance: they say that Nārada is accompanying them on the lute, and they praise the *kuravai* danced in Vṛndāvana. The final passage returns to the opening theme: the cowherd women pray to Māyōn for the benefit of their own cows and for the victory of the Pāṇṭiya king. The following canto, 18, opens with these lines:

> Then, when the *kuravai* had come to an end, . . . the old cowherd woman [Mātari] . . . went to the Vaiyai[198] river for a ritual bath and to praise Neṭumāl by offering flowers, incense, sandal, garlands, and cloths. (lines 1 . . . 6)[199]

3.523 *A* mullai *poem*

I have mentioned already above that the 'lyrical' cantos in particular are composed according to the *akattiṇai* conventions. The present canto without doubt must be classified as *mullai*, both in the parts that belong to the epic and in those that belong to the mythical level. The *karus* of *mullai* occur in such abundance that this identification does not create any difficulties: ghee (1] 7), churning-rope (1] 9), old cowherd women (1] 10); milk (2] 1), bull (ibid.), fragrant butter (2] 3), cows (2] 5); *mullai*, *konrai*, and *pūvai* (5] 4.10.12), etc. In the mythical context: *in the courtyard smeared with cowdung, in the Cowherd Village* (= Vraja or Gokula),[200] *cowherd* (āyavan, = Balarāma) (6] b2), *cowherd girl* (āya + makaḷ, = Pinnai, ibid.), kuruntu *tree* (7] 5; 8]a7), *konrai*, *āmpal*, and *mullai* (8]a 3.6.9), etc. Then there is obviously Māyavan (= Māyōn), who according to the *Tolk.* is a *karu* of the *mullaittiṇai*.

[198] The river flowing through Maturai, extensively treated in *Pari.*

[199] *āyar mutu makaḷ . . . pūvum pukaiyum puṉai cāntuṁ kaṇṇiyum . . . Vaiyai Neṭumāl aṭiy ētta ttūvi ttuṟai paṭiya ppōyiṉāḷ . . . kkuravai muṭivil.* The most likely translation of *puṉai* seems to be 'cloths'.

[200] *Āyar-pāṭiyil (tāt') eru manṟattu* (3] 5.6'; 10] 4); compare *Kali.* 103, 62; 108, 60f for similar phrases in poetical contexts.

We are dealing here, for the first time in our sources, with poetic material involving Māyōn the cowherd that shows a genuine employment of the *mullai* conventions. On the one hand, Māyōn has found a definite place in the epic *mullai* landscape, and on the other, we notice that the Northern myths about Kṛṣṇa are clearly conceived of in terms of the *mullai* associative system. Moreover, the canto illustrates the *religious* significance of Māyōn, which remains clearly visible through the poetic treatment.

But these remarks require modification. Although we are certainly dealing with a genuine *mullai* 'landscape', both in the outskirts of Maturai (epic) and in Vraja on the bank of the Yamunā (mythical), in some respects the treatment here is 'against the rules'. Thus the events of the canto are set in the early morning — the typical *mullai* time is the evening. But much more important: the *uri*, the emotional situation of the lovers, the very life of *caṅkam* poetry, remains very much in the background and has little to do with 'waiting of the beloved separated from her lover'. Although this is implied in the external situation of Kaṇṇaki, who is waiting in the cowherd village for the return of Kōvalan, it is not developed in the epic or mythical *kuravai*. Solely the songs of 8] make some, but very indirect, references to the *mullai uri* involved in the mythical theme: Kṛṣṇa returns home in the evening from herding the cows, and thus ends the separation from which the *gopīs* have been suffering during the day.[201] Pinnai 'loses her bracelets' because of her love-sickness for Kṛṣṇa.[202] At least it can be inferred from the literary treatment in this canto that 8] (a) and (c) illustrate the inchoate integration of the *mullai uri* into the Kṛṣṇa myths. Certainly the actual content of the canto, and the mythical themes treated in the dance, bear little resemblance to the older *mullai* poems where the stress is on the emotional situation and Māyōn figures in the few cases in which he is mentioned at all as nothing more than a poetic device. Here now the interest is in Kṛṣṇa's dance. The external paraphernalia, which could be integrated without difficulty, are conceived of in terms of the *mullai* system, but the *uri* of *mullai*, so much more difficult to harmonize with the dance, is on the whole ignored. Perhaps we can speak of an *external*

201 This is not explicitly stated, but may be inferred. Nammālvār, and then the BhP, will develop this theme extensively: see TVM X, 3 and BhP X, 31 (see 5.323).

202 Kṛṣṇa causing the bracelets to slip off by infatuating the girls will be a very frequent theme with the Ālvārs.

adaptation of the Kṛṣṇa myths to the traditional Tamil poetic conventions.

3.524 *Mythical repertoire and milieu*

In the *Āycciyarkuravai* we find for the first time in our sources an extensive treatment of Kṛṣṇa myths connected with Vraja/Vṛndāvana. Yet however limited and vague earlier sources for such myths may be, they suffice to show that the full treatment found here cannot be explained simply by chronology (i.e. that these myths were not known in the South till the sixth century or so).

The material discussed in the previous chapters proves at least that the *Kṛṣṇa-carita* was known in the South centuries before the final redaction of this canto. Moreover, the material found in this canto suggests another, corroborative line of argument; the form in which these Vṛndāvana episodes appear here betrays a lengthy period of adaptation to the Tamil cultural environment. We may begin by drawing up a list of stories and themes referred to in the canto.[203]

(1) Kṛṣṇa grazes the cows, returns home in the evening, and plays the flute.
(2) Kṛṣṇa's and Pinnai's mutual infatuation.
(3) The breaking of the *kuruntu* tree.
(4) The hiding of the clothes of the *gopīs*.
(5) The bullfight.
(6) Kṛṣṇa dances the *kuravai* dance with Pinnai.

Moreover, among non-erotic references we find mention of Yaśodā, of Kṛṣṇa's killing the calf (*kanru*)[204] and obtaining the fruits (of the wood-apple tree)[205] and of Kṛṣṇa's dancing the mysterious *kuṭa-kkūttu*.[206]

[203] The other cantos of the epic appear to add little to this list; anyway it is not the aim of the present study to provide a complete catalogue of all the episodes recorded for Kṛṣṇa's youth in Vraja/Vṛndāvana. The six episodes listed here exhaust what can be styled 'Tamil erotic Kṛṣṇa mythology'; even the Āḻvārs add no essentially new stories.

[204] Presumably the Dhenuka episode.

[205] 8](a) does not specify the tree; but the commentator says *viḷā* 'wood-apple tree'. This is borne out by the Āḻvārs, who make explicit reference to the species in connection with the *kanru* myth; for example, PâḻTM I, 6, 4.

[206] The *Cilappatikāram* itself (6, 54f) provides *one* explanation by connecting it

When we compare these six myths with our material in 2.00, there is only limited agreement; apart from Kṛṣṇa's herding the cows and playing the flute and from the *kuravai* dance itself (which appears to correspond to the *hallīsaka*), the remaining material seems peculiar to the Tamil sources. This material requires a more systematic discussion, and it is preferable to postpone that until further information has been collected. But even without a systematic discussion it is easy to see that the *Āycciyarkuravai* represents an idiosyncratic *Kṛṣṇa-carita* tradition that has no direct parallels in the Northern material. The structuring of this tradition according to the *mullai* conventions shows that we are dealing here with an autonomous Tamil development, which in turn would corroborate our assumption that the South came to know of the *Kṛṣṇa-carita* centuries before the presumed date of the redaction of the *Cila.*, the sixth century AD.

If this interpretation is correct, the question immediately arises: how can the almost total absence of references to such a genuine Tamil Kṛṣṇa tradition in the earlier sources be explained? I think that this problem, like others, can be solved if we introduce the

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with the Bāṇa episodes: *Vāṇaṉ pēr ūr maṟu kiṭai naṭantu/nī ṇilam Aḷantōṉ āṭiya kuṭam-um*, 'furthermore, the *kuṭa* dance which he who measured the great world danced when he was walking in the middle of the road in the large city of Bāṇa.' (Gros, *ad Pari.* III, 83, on p. 183, adopts this explanation; correct misprint II into VI). I do not know any version of the Bāṇa episodes that makes reference to such a dance. 'Kuṭam' is here usually rendered 'pot, vessel'. See PTMaṭ 74 (= lines 284-6) for what would appear to be a different description of the *kuṭam* dance. In the *CTMaṭ.* 7 we find the following description: 'Māl lifted up two splendid vessels, so that all people sang his praise, while drums were beaten, and he said: "Who is there in this big street?" and danced.' On the other hand, *kuṭam* also means 'west'. We have seen above in 6] that the girl acting as *kural* - Kṛṣṇa is positioned in the *west*. Thus one may wonder whether *kuṭakkūttu* is not a synonym for the *kuravai* as 'the dance [in which the leading figure is standing in] the west'. Moreover, *Cila.* 26, 120f mentions a *kuravai* danced by *kuṭa-kar* 'people from the west - (Coorg)'; on this see Appendix VIII. Yet another possible explanation could be derived from Veṅkaṭanātha's *Gopālaviṃśati* stanza 4: *āvir-bhavatv . . . ākuñcitâika-caraṇaṃ nibhṛtânya-pādam/dadhnā nimantha-mukhareṇa nibaddha-tālam . . . navanīta-nāṭ-yam/* 'May the "butter-dance" [of Kṛṣṇa before Yaśodā] appear before my eyes, (the dance) in which he keeps one foot firmly on the ground and bends the other foot [following] the rhythm furnished by the curds sounding [rhythmically] from [Yaśodā's] churning movement.' The commentator explains that Kṛṣṇa 'dances' in this manner to attract Yaśodā's attention and get some butter from her (p. 640, *ad locum*). Compare *Yādavâbhyudaya* IV, 27.

concept of different milieux. Generally speaking, we are here again dealing with Maturai and the Pāṇṭiya kingdom; not only is the *Āycciyarkuravai* part of the *Maturai-kkāṇṭam*, and not only is it set on the outskirts of the city, (on the bank of the Vaiyai, canto 18, 1-6), but the Pāṇṭiya king is also explicitly mentioned (1] 5 and 15] 7) and directly connected with the *kuravai* dance. On the other hand, we find little evidence to associate the canto with the ancient bardic court environment (as defined in 3.22). Instead of the political symbolism derived from the majestic Viṣṇu and linked with individual kings (see 3.35/36), we find here the Pāṇṭiya as an anonymous, or rather stereotyped figure.[207] He symbolizes here the authority that demands ghee from the cowherds, and for whose benefit the women pray. Similarly, the Māyōn known to these cowherd women is not the 'majestic Viṣṇu', but the 'cowherd' of Vraja/Vṛndāvana. Finally, the poetic technique differs from that of classical *caṅkam* poetry: we have noticed that the typical *uri* of *mullai* is hardly treated according to the strict classical conventions. On the other hand, the whole structure of the 'kuravai' as it appears here, in its stylization, symbolism, and choreography, would strongly favour the hypothesis that we are dealing with a non-*caṅkam* form of culture, a kind of 'folk literature'. As a similar assumption will appear plausible also for the *Kalittokai*, it may be suggested here that the *Āycciyarkuravai* documents areas of a popular folk culture in literature for the first time. When in this folk material Kṛṣṇa mythology shows already a pronounced Tamil flavour, it does not seem arbitrary to assume that this folk culture has behind it centuries of (undocumented) history.

The canto under discussion is composed according to a confusing variety of coding systems, and it is very difficult to say precisely in what way it reflects this folk culture. But to assume that the canto contains an exact 'recording' of such a 'real' *kuravai* would seem to be as much an over-simplification as to say that it is all nothing but an invention of the author. The author must have known something like a 'kuravai' in folk culture, while at the same time epic narrative and context, *akam* conventions, and the mythical episodes of which he knew must all have influenced his treatment of it.

The strictly religious material is fairly limited in this canto.

[207] See also 3.533-4 and 3.64 where we can observe the same anonymity.

The *kuravai* danced by the (epical) cowherd girls appears to be an apotropaic ritual consisting of praise and worship. This would conform to the purpose of the dance depicted in Bhāsa's *Pañcarātra*[208]. The form of worship which Mātari performs (18, 1-6) fits the type of folk-religion (as depicted in 3.214). Perhaps the phrase 'the deity praised in the *kuravai*'[209] expresses the most characteristic feature of the religion shown in the canto: folk dance, songs, and poetry are the ritual means of praising Māyōn, of enacting his erotic affairs in Vṛndāvana, and relishing the beauty both of the myths and of their treatment in folk culture.

3.53 *The* Kalittokai

3.531 *Introduction*

Our discussion of the *Āycciyarkuravai* in the epic *Cilappatikāram* touched upon a number of questions which could not be satisfactorily dealt with without further information. The relationship between the bull-baiting and the following *kuravai* had to remain obscure, and the assumption that the canto belonged to a folk culture was hardly more than a hypothesis. Fortunately, there is a further work available for comparison and clarification — although it must be added that certain other problems in turn require the *Āycciyarkuravai* for their elucidation. This second work is the *Kalittokai*, the 'Anthology [of poems] in the *kali* [metre]'. It resembles canto 17 of the epic in many respects: its roots appear to be in Tamil folk culture, Kṛṣṇa is mainly the 'cowherd' of Vṛndāvana, in the poems that are of particular interest for us here the treatment of the *uri* is non-classical, and even its date seems to be close to that which has been postulated for the final redaction of the epic, just as it belongs again to Maturai. But there are also differences: there is no epic narrative underlying the 150 individual songs, the poetic style is a more conscious imitation of the *caṅkam* model, and Kṛṣṇa religion is not directly dealt with. But we shall see that to consider both works together suggests some interesting insights into the situation of Kṛṣṇaism in the South in the sixth century or so.

The *Kalittokai* is a remarkable work in many respects, parti-

208 Act IV, *praveśaka*; see 2.333.

209 *kuravaiyuḷ ēttiya teyvam* 15]2.

cularly because of its 'vulgarisms'.[210] Yet it is due to its conscious leanings towards the classical *caṅkam* model that the anthology has been counted among the Eight Anthologies (*Eṭṭuttokai*) and considered to belong to the ancient classical *corpus*, viz. not later than the second or third century AD. But this early date cannot be maintained[211] and the sixth or seventh century is a much more likely date for the anthology. Moreover, even its classification as an 'anthology' is very doubtful. Traditionally, the five *tiṇai* sections are attributed to five different authors;[212] but a number of scholars are in favour of assuming one single author for all 150 poems.[213] Since only the Pāṇṭiya king of Maturai figures in the 'historical allusions',[214] we are again dealing with a work belonging to the kingdom of Maturai.

There are altogether about sixteen references to Māyōn in the *Kali.*, thirteen of which mention him by name and the remaining three by paraphrase or structural slot. Again, nine of these occur in the same *mullai* context (103-108), and the remaining references are found in various unrelated poems: 103, 50-55, 76; 104, 10, 38, 78; 105, 9, 72; 106, 48; 107, 33; 108, 55; —52, 5 (a *kuṟiñci* poem); 119, 3; 123; 4; 127, 4; 134, 1-3; 140, 8; 145, 64 (six *neytal* poems, the last one actually *peruntiṇai*). This distribution shows that poems 103-8 are of particular interest here, and in fact they all deal with the theme of bull-contest and *kuravai*. The other seven references will be discussed only very briefly.

[210] For a brief general characterisation see Zvelebil, 1973, pp. 119-23. On pp. 121f a translation (by A. K. Ramanujan) of poem 94 illustrates well what Zvelebil calls the '"vulgar" (< vulgus) trends' (p. 119) of this collection: a hunchback woman and a male dwarf are arguing about how to make love!

[211] Zvelebil, 1973, pp. 120. 123; Compare p. 29; 1975, pp. 100f. I presume that my analysis of Māyōn material in this collection can serve as corroborative evidence.

[212] For the ancient poems, scholars today tend to take the traditional ascriptions rather seriously. But in the case of the *Kali.*, the tradition is very dubious; we have only a spurious *veṇpā* stanza which is not found in any of the mss of the work and is ignored by the commentator (Zvelebil 1973, p. 123). We read in this stanza: . . . — *aruñ Cōḷaṉ/Nallu(ru)tiraṉ mullai* . . . 'the *mullai* [section] by the mighty Cōḷa king Nalluruttiraṉ' (*Kalittokai* p. 5 of *aṇinturai*). A Cōḷa king with a Śaivite name (< Rudra) as the author of pronouncedly Kṛṣṇaite poems which make frequent — and exclusive — reference to the Pāṇṭiya king — makes the ascription all the more dubious.

[213] Zvelebil, 1973, p. 123; 1975, p. 101, note 99; Gros, 1968, p. xix; Schomerus, 1961, p. 379; K. N. Sivaraja Pillai, 1932, pp. 224-6; etc.

[214] Zvelebil, 1973, p. 123.

3.532 *Seven individual references to Māyōn*

As with poems like *Nar*. 32,[215] almost all these references occur in comparisons and in non-*mullai* poems. Twice we meet with direct allusions to the *Kṛṣṇa-carita* (Kaṃsa's wrestlers and his elephant Kuvalayapīḍa): (52, 5) 'he who resembles Māl who broke the strength of the wrestlers'[216] and (134, 1, 3-4) 'the sun setting on the mountain, resembling the discus that was plunged into the fine forehead of the murderous elephant, [the discus] of Him who broke the strength of the wrestlers and whose chest is [adorned with] a cool, flowering garland'.[217] The discus is mentioned in two further comparisons: (119, 3) 'darkness resembling the complexion of Him [who is armed with] the discus'[218] and (127, 4) '(various flowers) that resemble the garland of Him [who is armed with] the discus and who is mighty in battle'.[219] In 140, 8 allusion is made to Kṛṣṇa's son Pradyumna = Kāma.[220] Viṣṇu as the 'majestic' transcendental god is referred to in 123, 4f: 'the big ocean, resembling Māl of a nature "which is an object impossible to obtain/comprehend" who is reclining and listening to the lute'.[221] Finally (145, 64), Śrī is mentioned: 'she resembling Tiru [united to] the chest of Māyavaṉ'.[222] What is perhaps most interesting here is the *large number* of such references; besides, further elements from the *Kṛṣṇa-carita* (52; 134; 140) are documented here. Compared with the scarcity of references to Māyōṉ in the earlier *corpus*, these seven phrases alone would be significant. However, the section 103-108 deserves closer attention.

3.533 *The bull-contest concluded by a* kuravai

Within the *mullai* section (songs 101-17) we find a group of poems (101-8) dealing with the theme of a bullfight (*ēṟu-koḷ* or *ēṟu-taḻuvu*) and the *kuravai* as the concluding part of the celebration. What remained obscure in the *Āycciyarkuravai* (4] to 6]) is treated

215 See 3.3, No. 7.

216 *Mallarai maṟañ cāytta Māl pōṟṟaṉ.*

217 *Mallarai maṟañ cāytta, malar taṇ tār akalattōṉ/ . . . /kol yāṉaiy aṇi nutal aḻuttiya āḻi pōl/kal cērpu ñāyiṟu.*

218 *Nēmiyāṉ niṟam pōla iruḷ.*

219 *Ceru miku Nēmiyāṉ tār pōla.*

220 *Neṭiyoṉ makaṉ.*

221 *Arum poruḷ marapiṉ Māl, yāḻ kēḷā kkiṭantāṉ pōl/peruṅ kaṭal.*

222 *Māyavaṉ mārpiṉ Tiru ppōl avaḷ.*

here at great length and in detail. The 'bullfight' or 'bull-contest' ('bull-baiting', 'bull-taking' Zvelebil) as it appears here in the Tamil sources must not be mistaken for the Hispanic *corrida de toros*. Its closest parallel would be the *rodeo*, to which we must add the character of the *svayaṃvara* as known from Sanskrit literature. Among the Todas, the 'bull' is a male water-buffalo; when a boy succeeds in riding on such a bull and subduing it, he wins as his bride a girl whom her father the owner of the bull has promised in advance to the successful contender. Some extracts from poem 102 may illustrate this peculiar custom.[223]

A young cowherd asks:

> 'Who is she who has today entered my body and my soul—she among those girls crowding together with gentle chatter, and adorned with wreaths and garlands which lavishly hold the cool fragrant *piṭavam* which shoots up enjoying the rain which vehemently falls from the broad sky, the *taḷavam* (=*mullai*) of intertwining creepers, the *tōnri* of great beauty, and the *konrai* resplendent in clusters?'

We find here a generous scattering of *karus*: the four types of flowers and the rain are all evocative of the *mullaittiṇai*. The boy's question is answered by another spectator who refers to the opening ceremony of the contest:

> 'It is she who has been given away in the announcement — while [drums] were constantly beaten — which [mentioned] this stipulation, for everyone to hear:
>
> > "Ō! Ō! Nobody will touch the beautiful black body of this girl, unless he can subdue [this] strong bull of fighting spirit!"'

Thus the girl has been promised to the victor of the contest. The boy has it proclaimed that he is accepting the challenge, and the spectacle begins. While many brave men run towards the bull and try to jump on him, the boy succeeds:

> That bull from the stable suffered pain from him who showed himself [riding] on the hump and holding on to the neck with his arms stretched out and

[223] The poem is, like many other *Kali* songs, a kind of miniature play. Unfortunately, no 'stage directions' are included in the text, and sometimes it is difficult to work out who is speaking. I had to rely on the comm. 103, 1-55 has been translated and discussed by Zvelebil, 1962; 60-72 in Edholm/Suneson, 1972, pp. 46f.

black as sapphire. Then the wealthy master of the bull, seeing its agony, rose up and asked of what use his refusal would be.

Thus the father yields in order to spare the bull further pain and gives the girl to the boy who managed to subdue the bull. The eventful day concludes with the *kuravai*:

Thereafter,
when the beat of the *taṇṇumai* drum rose up incessantly, the soft shoulders of the girl of nice smile were praised in the *kuravai* dance of sweet rhythm and melody; she was compared with the hero

> of black complexion, dressed in a fine ochre garment, adorned with a garland, capable of wonderful vigour, and splendid in the power of his firm arms.

The fame [of his achievement] spread over the meeting ground of the small village.[224]

Thus the *kuravai* as the concluding part of the bullfight serves to praise the boy and the girl who are dancing together.

The events, as can be inferred from *Kali.* 102, are structurally very closely related to the *Āycciyarkuravai*, with the obvious difference that the epic canto describes the ritual enactment of a *mythical kuravai*, while here we seem to be dealing with a poetically transfigured *real kuravai.* The common elements are: the setting in a cowherd community; the announcement which girl can be obtained by subduing which bull; garlanding the hero; dancing the *kuravai* in which the hero and the girl he has won are praised. To this the *Kali.* adds the actual description of the bullfight.

The following songs (103-6) are variations on the pattern displayed in 102, with the addition of further interesting details. Thus there are indications that in a number of places we are dealing with actual songs sung in the *kuravai.* For 106, 34-45 this is explicitly stated by the commentators.[225] Other examples are 103, 63-74 and 104, 63-76. In content, they correspond to the brief reference in 102, 36-39: 'the soft shoulders of the girl were praised, — comparing her to the hero. . . .' For example:

[224] For the Tamil text see Appendix VII, 2).

[225] 35-45 *varukiṉra tāḻicai nāṅkum kuravaiy āṭuvār pāṭukiṉra icai ppāṭukkaḷ* 'the four stanzas running from line 35 to 45 are the songs sung by those dancing the *kuravai*' (*Peru. viḷakkam ad* 35; *aṅṅaṉaṉē pāṭā niṉra āycciyar* 'cowherd girls who are singing in that manner' (*itaṉporuḷ ad* 46). See also note 226.

'A cowherd girl will not embrace, even in another life, a herdsman who is afraid of the horns of a murderous bull!
The shoulders of the pitiless cowherd girl cannot be embraced by a coward scared to forsake his life — a man must be without fear and subdue a murderous bull!

No bride-price need be paid for the girl belonging to our cowherd tribe, if [a man] enters between the horns of the murderous bull, thrusting down his chest, as if he were [sinking] in the breasts of his [beloved] girl.'[226] (103, 63f. 65-7. 71-3)

These dance songs, which correspond to *Āycci.* 8] (a) and (c), illustrate the erotic character not only of the dance, but also of the bull-contest. The man is expected to prove his manliness directly by subduing the bull, and indirectly this act of 'riding between the horns of the bull' is felt to be sexually symbolic. In the *Āycci.*, these features appear only very indirectly. But it is also quite apparent now that the erotic content of the bullfight and the *kuravai* are *not* related to the typical emotional situation of the *mullai-tiṇai*. I shall return to this problem soon.

Āycci. 15], the conclusion to the dance, is shown by the present material to be stereotyped. While 102, 33-9 lacks some of the characteristic features, these are fully expressed in 103, 74-9; 104, 77-80; 105, 70-5; 106, 46-50. These stanzas after (usually) referring to the 'praise of the couple' and to the *kuravai*, mention the 'praise of Māyōn' and the welfare of the Pāṇṭiya king.[227] The commentator actually says: 'It is the custom in the *kuravai*, to sing the praise of the god and the king.'[228]

Thus, we praise Him with the discus of eternal brilliance (= Māyōn), so that this world altogether accepts the royal command of Tennavan (= the Southern king, = Pāṇṭiya) with the drum comparable to incessant thundering. (104, 77-80)[229]

[226] For the Tamil original see Appendix VII, 3). The commentator (*Peru. viḷakkam*, p. 23) identifies these song stanzas: 65-73 *varuvana kuravai kkūtt' āṭuvōr pāṭuvaṉav ām* . . . '(the passage) running from line 65 to 73 is sung by the dancers of the *kuruvai*. . . .' For a close parallel to stanza (d) see BhP X, 58, 40 (quoted in Appendix XI, 2, with note 16).

[227] For poetical reasons the wording varies, and these elements are not always spelled out in full. But the structural similarity allows for a safe identification even where only a general 'deity' or 'king' occurs.

[228] *Peru. viḷakkam* p. 23: *kuravai kkūttil teyvattai vāḻttuvatum aracaṉai vāḻttuvatum marapu.*

Thus, we praise Him with the victorious discus (=Māyōn) who abides on the Serpent in the roaring ocean, so that the Pāṇṭiya king shines forth forever . . . (105, 70 . . . 75).[230]

Thus these concluding stanzas place the whole ceremony of bull-fight and *kuravai* in a framework of religious and political significance. The religious significance of the *kuravai* is also quite apparent in the *Āycci.*, but while here it is linked with a particular purpose, viz. to ward off evil from the herds, it is generalized in the *Kali.*, the praise of the god serving to benefit the Pāṇṭiya and through him the whole country.

3.534 *Pāṇṭiya and Māyōn*

The analysis of references to Māyōn in the oldest *caṅkam* poems has already shown how closely the Pāṇṭiya king was associated with Māyōn, though in contrast to the present material the Pāṇṭiya king was not anonymous. But at least in general terms, the present material appears to continue this association.

In a number of places, the section 103-8 makes further reference to both the Pāṇṭiya and Māyōn in the main body of the songs (viz. outside the 'concluding stanzas'). Since the *caṅkam* rules are strictly adhered to here, the references have to occur in coded form (which was not necessary in the epic style). The Pāṇṭiya king is mentioned, for example, in 104, 4-6: 'cowherds and their relations, in whom the ancient fame of the Pāṇḍya king is firmly established.'[231] We can say that these poetically coded references to the Pāṇṭiya complement the 'concluding stanzas' and that the songs are thus dedicated to that dynasty.

Māyōn is mentioned: 103, 50-5; 104, 9-10.33-38; 105, 9; 107, 31-3; 108, 55-6; in three places a black bull is compared to Māyōn:

The black bull full of vigour, resembling Him with the chest marked by Tiru, who [is armed with] the discus famous for its golden beauty and superior in the heat of battle . . .[232]

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229 *Āṅku, ttol katir tTikiriyār paravutum, olkā/uru mural muracir Rennavark'/ orumoli koḷka ivvulak' uṭan enavē.*

230 *ena, pāṭ' imil parapp' akaṭṭ' aravaṇaiy acaiiya/āṭu koḷ Nēmiyār paravutum, . . . Poruppan manni/. . . . viḷaṅkukav enavē.*

231 *. . . Tennavan/toll icai naṭṭa kuṭiyoṭu . . ./āyar/*; compare also 105, 1-7.

232 *Poru muraṇ mēm paṭṭa polam puṉai pukal nēmi/ttiru maru mārpan pōl tiral*

The black bull with the white curl on its forehead . . . resembling the conch in the mouth of Him [who is armed with] the discus. . . .[233]
The appearance of the young black bull . . . is like that of Him of black complexion. . . .[234]

In a more elaborate passage, the hero is compared to Kṛṣṇa:

See the elegance of the herdsman wearing a garland of *kāyā* flowers, who has got hold of the bull by its ears . . . and dominates it! I feel embrrassed at heart, since such a person is perhaps Māyōn (himself) who in former times tore asunder the mouth of the maned horse which was sent (against him) by his enemies, and killed it.[235]

Thus we can say, still speaking solely about the poetic form, that these songs take up frequently the reference to Māyōn found in the concluding stanzas. There we actually hear of 'praising' Māyōn.[236] This by itself would raise the question whether *the actual songs do not in some way contain* the praise of Māyōn which is amply illustrated in the *Āycci.* Not only the very many references to Māyōn in this section, but also the great similarity of these songs to the *Āycci.*, a similarity which extends to actual verbal repetitions, would suggest such a hypothesis.[237]

cānṟa kāṟiyum, 104, 9-10; similar to *Puṟa.* 58, a white bull is compared to Vāliyōn (7-8), and two further bulls to Śiva and Murukaṉ.

[233] *Nēmiyāṉ vāy vaitta vaḷai pōla/. . . curi neṟṟi kkāṟiyum*, 105, 9-10.

[234] *Iḷaṅ kāṟi ttōṟṟaṅ kāṇ/. . . nī niṟa Vaṇṇaṉum pōṉṟ.* 104, 36 . . . 38.

[235] *Cēe ccevi mutaṟ koṇṭu peyartt' oṟṟuṅ/kāyām pūṅ kaṇṇi ppotuvaṉ ṟakai kaṇṭai/ mēvār viṭuttanta kūntaṟ kutiraiyai/vāy pakutt' iṭṭu ppuṭaitta ñāṉṟ' iṉṉaṅ kol/Māyōṉ eṉṟ' uṭkiṟṟ' eṉ neñcu.* 103, 51-5. The mythological reference is to Kṛṣṇa's killing the horse-demon Keśī. In 108, 55f a lover swears to Māyōn an oath of faithfulness, and in 107, 31-5 parents approve of their daughter's lover, since Māyōn seems to approve.

[236] *Paravutum*: 103, 76; 104, 78; 105, 72; 106, 48. Compare *Cila.* 17, 15] 2 *ēttiya teyvam* 'the god praised'.

[237] (a) *Āycci.* 10] 4: *tāt' eru maṉṟatt' āṭuṅ kuravai*
Kali. 103, 62: *tāt' eru maṉṟatt' ayarvar taḻūu*
Kali. 108, 60f: *tāt' eru maṉṟattu ttūṅkuṅ kuravai.*
(b) *Āycci.* 8] a3: *koṉṟaiy an tīṅ kuḻal*
Kali. 106, 3: *koṉṟai ttīṅ kuḻal.*
(c) *Āycci.* 8] a6: *āmpal an tīṅ kuḻal*
Kali. 108, 62: *āmpaṟ kuḻal.*
(d) *Āycci.* 4] 1: *kāri kataṉ añcāṉ pāyntāṉ*
Kali. 104, 74: *kāri kataṉ añcāṉ pāynta*
Kali. 104, 21: *kāri kataṉ añcāṉ kolpavaṉ.*
For further parallels see Edholm/Suneson, p. 47. Even if there is direct borrowing here, it is impossible to determine the direction.

Moreover, other passages can well be interpreted as making the songs (and the events described in them) *evoke the deeds and characteristics of Kṛṣṇa*. This is actually expressed in 103, 51-5 (translated above) by the girl herself. Also 102, 35-7 can be seen in this light: black body, ochre garment, garland of *kāyā* flowers, great strength in fighting. These figure also in stereotyped descriptions of Kṛṣṇa, e.g., in the *Paripāṭal*: 'Lord with the garland! . . . Wrestler of strength in fights, . . . with a gold-hued garment!'[238] Or: 'O you whose garment contrasts (in colour) with your black body!'[239] 'Evocation of Kṛṣṇa' would in this case mean: not only 'dedication of the songs to Kṛṣṇa' (parallel to their 'dedication to the Pāṇṭiya'), but also singing his praise *by making him indirectly the hero of the events described* in the songs.

3.54 *The bullfight and* kuravai *dance*

The previous analysis of the *Āycciyarkuravai* and the poems in the *Kalittokai* left a number of points unproven. In order to corroborate those hypothetical assumptions, it is necessary to explore the occurrence and treatment of the two themes, bullfight and *kuravai*, in the much wider context of South Indian civilization as a whole.[240]

Thus, first, it can be shown that the bullfight in various forms exists even today as a popular custom. Also the Todas and Kotas in the Nilgiri hills practise it. Moreover, the poetry which is composed by the Todas about the bullfight shows close parallels with expressions and themes found in the *Kalittokai* poems. All this evidence would suggest that the bullfight is indeed an ancient South Indian custom, and that *Kali.* in fact bases its descriptions on real events.

Various forms of *kuravai* dances are mentioned in a considerable number of *caṅkam* poems, both in *akam* and *puram* contexts, and also in what can be assumed to be purely descriptive passages. Besides modern derivatives of the word 'kuravai' itself, we find among the Todas the custom of a 'shouting dance', which in fact follows after the bullfight. Thus it may be concluded that the

238 *Pari.* III, 87-89, *mālai ccelva*! . . ./*polam puriy āṭai* . . ./. . . *poru tiraṉ malla*!

239 *māa meyyoṭu muraṇiyav uṭukkai-yai*! *Pari.* IV, 8.

240 Since the details of this investigation would interrupt the course of our main argument considerably, they are provided in Appendices VIII and IX.

kuravai also was a real dance in ancient Tamilnadu, and furthermore, that the real bullfight and a real *kuravai* dance constituted a composite whole, the latter concluding the former.

Secondly, there is ample evidence to show that the ancient Tamil South knew of a peculiar Kṛṣṇaite myth in which Kṛṣṇa fought with, and then defeated, seven bulls, thereby obtaining Piṉṉai as his bride. This evidence is furnished by the Āḻvārs, the Southern recension of the Hv, the BhP, etc. Similarly the Āḻvārs, as also the *Āycci.* itself, demonstrate the existence of the *kuravai* as a mythical theme associated with Kṛṣṇa and Piṉṉai. The assumption, however, that also in the Kṛṣṇa myth the bullfight and the *kuravai* originally constituted a composite whole rests almost exclusively on the *Āycci.*, since the evidence of the Āḻvārs is not fully conclusive.

Thirdly, a superficial glance at *Āycci.* and *Kali.* might suggest that the former depicts the myth and the latter the real event. But in my opinion such an interpretation is still incomplete. Naturally, the *āycciyar* are aware that they are enacting a mythical event; but their dance betrays a highly formalized and structured character, and 'tradition' is more than once referred to. Thus we may conclude that in the *Āycci.* a description is given of a kind of religious folk dance, which deals with, or better, in which are enacted the mythical bullfight and *kuravai.* Moreover I would suggest that even the poems in the *Kali.* must be interpreted in a similar (though not the same) manner. The events, as depicted in the poems, are meant to be the praise of Māyōṉ, and are presented as 'evocative of Māyōṉ', and therefore even here a folk custom appears depicted in which the really executed bullfight and dance are penetrated by Kṛṣṇaite symbolism. But there remains the obvious difference that the bullfight here is real, while the *āycciyar*'s dance is purely representational enactment of the myth.

The underlying structure is the same in all three cases. A particular bull is pointed out, and the man who subdues him can win a girl as bride; courageous boys and men attempt this, one of them succeeds and is garlanded by the girl. The couple dance the *kuravai*, while people sing songs in which the couple is praised, comments are made on the dance, and a religious blessing is invoked. As religious folk ritual, reference to Māyōṉ and the Pāṇṭiya king are added.

Finally, we have to assess the impact of the *poetic* treatment on

the real, mythical, and folk-religious bullfight-cum-*kuravai* in our two sources. It appears that the imposition of a *mullai* character represents the contribution of the two authors. Since neither the bullfight nor the *kuravai* belong to the traditional repertoire of this *tiṇai*, and since it would be very difficult to argue that the themes are recent imports from the North, the best explanation appears to be that during the 'Tamil renaissance' literati for the first time resorted to non-conventional themes and areas of real life, and attempted to categorize them according to the *akattiṇai* schema. This evinces on the one hand the considerable ideological power of the schema even at this relatively late date, and on the other hand it suggests that Kṛṣṇa religion in these popular strata was unaware of the sentiments which could agree with the *uri* of *mullai*, separation.

Before we can discuss Kṛṣṇaism in the Tamil renaissance literature more generally, one further source will have to be analysed.

3.55 *Akanāṉūṟu* 59 by Maturai Maruta ṉ Iḷa Nākaṉār

The poet belongs to a period later than the *Paripāṭal*, since he refers to 'Antuva ṉ who sang about Paraṅkuṉram of Muruka ṉ', viz. the poet of *Pari.* VIII.[241]

Poem 59 is classified as *pālai*, although the emotional situation itself is *mullai*. A friend comforts the woman who is distressed by her husband's departure.

You with eyes like two lilies
  which have lost their sparkling beauty,
are greatly distressed–
comfort yourself!
On the path he is walking now
  after parting from us —
    that your bamboo arms grew thin —
  to live abroad,

[241] There are 23 poems in the *Akan.* ascribed to this poet; without the Maturai, the name occurs also in the spurious *veṇpā* listing the authors of the *Kali.* (see note 212 above). Again without the Maturai the name is found in ascriptions for a number of poems in the *Kuṟu.*, *Naṟ.*, and *Puṟa.*, but it is difficult to tell whether all these poems are by the same author. Compare Gros, 1968, pp. xixf and Zvelebil, 1975, pp. 270f. Zvelebil suggests a date of 'anything between AD 250-400', which seems rather early in view of the reference to the *Paripāṭal*, which Zvelebil, 1975, p. 101 dates *c.* AD 350-550.

planning to amass wealth, a difficult achievement,
in a distant country,
he may not remember the time when he caressed your neck
resembling a cluster of cool and fragrant lilies
and splendid like the garments women wear
to bathe in the pools
on the mountain rich in sandal and **sung about by Antuvaṉ,**
on cool Paraṅkuṉram of Murukaṉ
who displays great fury with his glittering,
long, leaf-shaped spear
which cut asunder the body of the demon.
O friend!
(But
on the path he is walking)
the elephant with temples wet with rut,
on which bees try to settle,
tramples down the *yā* tree with luscious leaves
but lofty trunk,
so that the shy females with tender heads may eat them,
while he drives off the bees
– like Māl who broke the tree by stamping on it
so that the cowherd girls might dress themselves
with its cool leaves,
on the spacious sandy bank of the Toḻunai
in the North, rich with water.[242]

The *kuṟiñci* complex, evoked by the hill, Murukaṉ, and the caresses, symbolizes the past happiness of the couple; the husband may forget it, eager as he is for new adventures, but in the arid *pālai* scenery[243] the male elephant's tenderness to his cows, which in turn evokes Kṛṣṇa's amorous games with the *gopīs*, will make him remember past happiness, and the bees, commonly symbol of playboys, will make him jealous; and — this hope is implied — he may even return immediately to his wife.[244]

[242] For the Tamil text see Appendix VII, 4).

[243] The *yā* tree is a *karu* of *pālai*, comp. *Naṟ*. 137, *Kali*. 11, Cāmināṭaiyar's edition of *Kuṟu*., p. 88.

[244] *Kuṟu*. 37, ascribed to Peruṅ Kaṭuṅ Kō 'who sang about the *pālai*' is most likely the model for *Akan*. 59 and illustrates the restraint typical of the classical style:

'He possesses great love, and will show you his affection, o friend!
On the path he is walking, an elephant of big trunk shows his love by tearing down the *yā* tree of soft leaves, to quench the hunger of his females.'

The Vṛndāvana episode alluded to in *Akan.* 59 is not known from other sources. On the other hand, the 'leaf-dress' is a common *caṅkam* motif. Thus we hear in *Kuṟi.* 102: *pai viri alkuṟ koy taḻai taii* '(we) put on plaited leaves over (our) Venus-mounts that spread out like a cobra's hood'. The leaf-garment would thus seem to be a sign of a girl's puberty. In TVir 22 the lover gives this leaf-frock to the girl. In *Kuṟu.* 294, a mother ties it round her daughter's loins, to make sure, it seems, that she has no affair with a boy. *Tirukkōvaiyār* 58 brings out the sexual connotation most clearly: *poṉ ṉiṟa alkulukk' āmō maṇi niṟa ppūn taḻaiyē* 'Would these fine leaves, of sapphire colour, be fitting for your golden Venus-mount?' According to the commentators, the boy who is thus asking the girl, indicates his intention to sleep with her, and to 'reserve' her for himself — the leaf-frock might be the sign that the girl is not 'available' any more (perhaps we can interpret *Kuṟu.* 294 also in this sense).

On the other hand, line 6 of *Akan.* 59 seems to link up with other mythical allusions. We read: *maram cela mititta Māal* 'Māl who trampled on the tree so that it came down to the ground'. Already the commentator specifies 'tree' as *kuruntam*. We have encountered in the *Aycci.* (7] 5; 8]a7) the allusion to Kṛṣṇa's 'breaking the *kuruntu* tree' (*kurunt' ocittāṉ, °tta Māyavaṉ* ('Māyavaṉ) who broke the *kuruntu*') which as such is not known from any source outside the Tamil tradition. It would seem possible to identify both allusions, in *Akan.* 59, 6 and *Āycci.* 7] and 8], because, when Āṇṭāḷ speaks about the *vastraharaṇa* episode (NTM III), she mentions that Kṛṣṇa is sitting in a *kuruntu* tree (stanzas 2—5. 7f). It would appear that we are actually dealing here with two versions of the same episode: originally Kṛṣṇa broke a tree to provide leaf-garments for the *gopīs* (with all the sexual overtones this implies); the later version, perhaps due to ignorance of the archaic significance of 'leaf-garment', makes Kṛṣṇa steal the clothes (with the sexual implications quite apparent).[245] But the poem is interesting not only because it allows us to identify the episode 'Kṛṣṇa breaking the *kuruntu* tree' and see in it the origin of the

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nacai perit' uṭaiyar nalkalu naṉkuvar|piṭi paci kaḷaiiya peruṅ kai vēḻam|meṉ ciṉai yāam poḷikkum aṉpiṉa tōḻiy avar ceṉṟav āṟē.

[245] See also below, 5.321, BhP X, 22; *Āycci.* 8]c refers to the *vastraharaṇa* — is this a combined version of the two different versions?

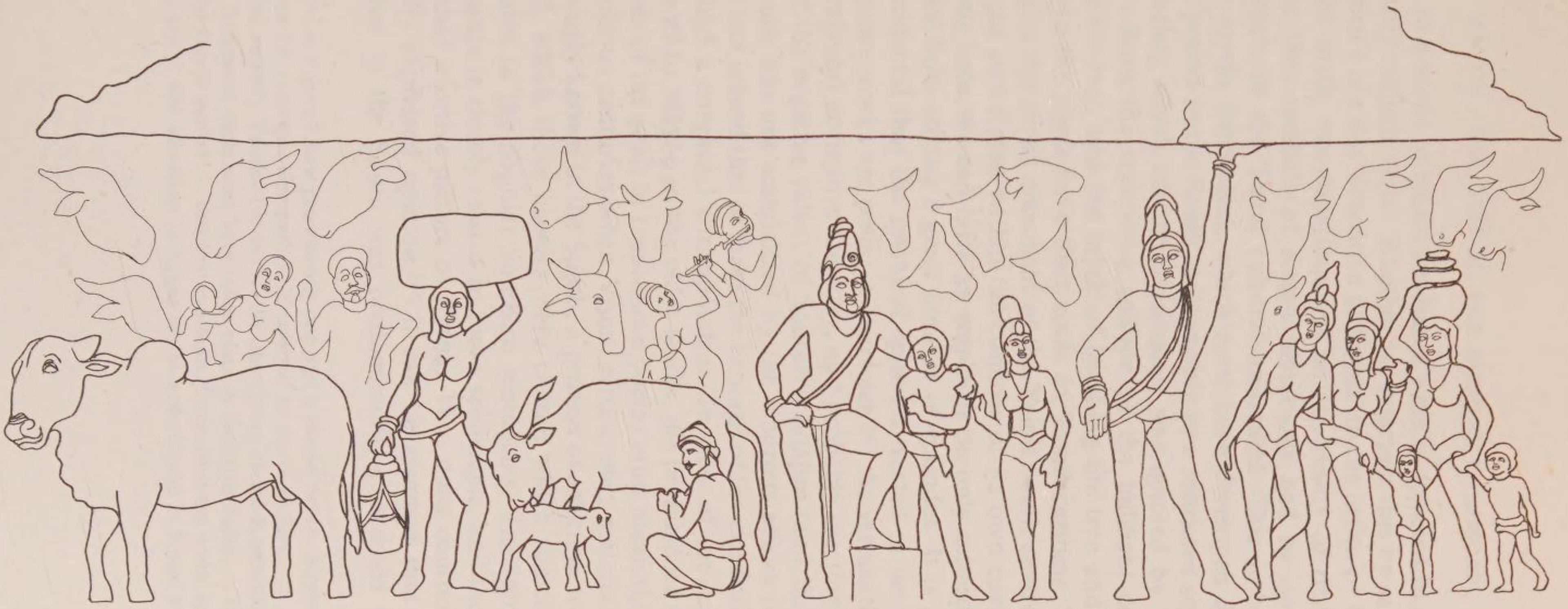
vastraharaṇa myth, but also because of other features. Thus we have here an example of a reference to a temple (Paraṅkuṉram) occupying a position which in the classical poetry would be a 'historical allusion' to a king or chieftain, just as we shall notice in the *Paripāṭal* poems. Attention may also be drawn to the parallelism Murukaṉ : Māyōṉ in the poem. Its overall structure relates closely to *Paripāṭal* VIII (see 3.66 below) to which it makes also explicit reference. At the same time, poem 59 is interesting because it shows that at a date later than the *Paripāṭal* the *akattiṇai* ideology is still struggling to harmonize Southern Kṛṣṇa mythology with Māyōṉ's function in the Landscape of Jasmine, since the Kṛṣṇaite episode illustrates Kṛṣṇa's tender love-making, but not the *gopīs*' separation.

3.56 *Summary*

3.561 *The spirit of the Tamil renaissance*

The sources that we have discussed in the present section allow us for the first time to gain some information about Kṛṣṇaism in the south. A major shift in the cultural awareness took place towards the middle of the first millennium AD in the region of Maturai, and this new awareness made it possible for popular religion to become documented in literature. An interest in real life, which could turn to themes like the bullfight or even such 'vulgar' matters as love-making between deformed people, went together with an interest in the myths and folk rituals of Kṛṣṇaism. This remarkable fusion of interests can for instance be detected in the *Kali.* poems, but we also have a striking visual parallel for it, which —by reference to the chronology used here—would belong to a slightly later date (as also to a different area): the *Govardhana-dharaṇa* relief in one of the caves in Mahabalipuram.[246] The myth of Kṛṣṇa's lifting the mountain forms, also visually, the

[246] See Figure 2, which depicts the rock-relief in one of the Mahabalipuram caves, executed during the 'second stage of the Pallava style' (Goetz, 1964, pp. 122-7), viz. around the middle of the seventh century AD. The accent clearly lies on the realistic scene of country life, on the activities in the cowherd station; note in particular the man milking the cow, which constitutes the centre of gravity in the relief.



Relief in the *Govardhanadharaṇa* cave at Mahābalipuram near Madras

frame to a scene in which herdsmen's life is depicted in an extraordinarily realistic style. Whether we interpret this by saying that herdsmen's life was 'evocative of Kṛṣṇa' to the artist, or by saying that the myth was superimposed on the reality of daily life, it is clear that symbols of Kṛṣṇa mythology had by now found deep roots in the Tamil cultural awareness. This is borne out by the myths themselves, which must have developed during an earlier period in the South, presumably in a restricted segment of that society which till the renaissance was ignored by '*caṅkam*' poetry. Both the composite episode of the bullfight concluded by the *kuravai*, and the myth of breaking the tree and offering leaves to the *gopīs* have their roots in Tamil customs. Thus we have here the (first) document of the Tamil South envisaging the Northern god Kṛṣṇa within the confines of its own customs. At the same time, we can infer an emphasis on only certain aspects, a choice from among a great number of episodes. It is probably not accidental that the mythical episodes treated in detail in the renaissance works are *erotic* in character.[247] As yet unaffected by the (brahmin) normative ideology, and probably reacting strongly against the negative values of Southern Jainism (and Buddhism), the South was not scandalized by the amorous affairs of Kṛṣṇa, and in fact sensed that in these the heritage of the classical *caṅkam* spirit had a congenial correspondent. In view of the scarcity of references to Māyōṉ in the older works, the prominence of Kṛṣṇa the lover of the *gopīs* in renaissance poems must mean that during the previous centuries when Viṣṇu, Kṛṣṇa, etc., material became increasingly known in the South, a process of selection took place through which those aspects were chosen which somehow corresponded to the popular Southern sentiments. The spirit of the renaissance is closely related to those sentiments, and thus reproduces that selective picture of Kṛṣṇa. Thus quite contrary to the generally expressed opinion,[248] it can be assumed that popular Kṛṣṇaism in the South was predominantly concerned with the

[247] Note in Figure 2 how prominently one *gopī* is placed next to Kṛṣṇa, admiring as it seems his prowess. Compare S 28 referred to above in 2.51.

[248] Most recently Vaudeville, 1975: 'the absorption of the Kṛṣṇa-Gopāla cycle into the Vaiṣṇavite cycle must have taken place in Southern India . . . towards the end of the Gupta period . . . this first synthesis disregarded the erotic episodes. . .' (p. 108). On p. 109, eroticism in Kṛṣṇa myths and religion is denied even for the Ālvārs!

lover of the *gopīs*, and that already some time before the sixth century AD.

3.562 *Northern sources of popular Kṛṣṇaism*

This leads us to the quęstion whether it is possible to identify sources of the popular Kṛṣṇaism in the South from among the Northern material. If this were possible, we would have here at the same time an independent means of determining the chronology of the Southern material. Although such an investigation presents certain difficulties, it will nevertheless confirm — in a general sense — the chronology which has been adopted above.

A glance at Table IV reveals that only Hāla, the Hv, and 'Bhāsa' are likely candidates. Since separation as the *uri* typical of *mullai* could not be detected in the present material, those Northern texts which deal with the *gopīs' viraha* (Śyāmilaka and particularly the Br/ViP) can be excluded. Similarly the *rāsa* dance (introduced by the Br/ViP) differs so markedly from the *kuravai* described in the *Āycci.*, that Northern works referring to it can be ignored here. Finally, the figure of Rādhikā must be distinguished from Pinnai (see 3.712 below), and thus references to her cannot apply to our present material.

I have tried to show (see above 2.333) that the *hallīsaka* dance is peculiar to Bhāsa; according to his description, it is danced by Kṛṣṇa *and* his elder brother Balarāma.[249] A very similar dance scene in Bhāsa's drama *Pañcarātra* is motivated by a bad omen. In *Āycci.* 3] we read:

> Let us dance the *kuravai* which Māyavaṉ danced together with Piññai . . . which is among the dances of the *Vālacaritai* which were danced by him and his elder brother . . . in Vraja.
> Indeed it was a prayer that the evil might depart from the cows and calves.[250]

[249] This feature is notably absent in the *rāsa* of the Br/ViP.

[250] *Āyar pāṭiyil Māyavaṉ uṭaṉ tammuṉ āṭiya Vālacaritai-nāṭakaṅkaḷil Piññaiyōṭ' āṭiya kuravai āṭutum yām; — kaṟavai kaṉru tuyar nīṅkuka eṉavē.* In *Cila.* 6, 47 we find a similar expression: *añcaṉa vaṇṇaṉ āṭiya āṭaluḷ* 'among the dances which He of the complexion of collyrium danced'. Regarding this as parallel, I have translated 'among the dances'. The plural does not create any difficulty here, since also in Bhāsa various activities of Kṛṣṇa were given the name 'hallīsaka', like his stamping on Kāliya's hoods. But matters would be simpler, if we could read *nāṭakat-til* 'in the drama (called *Bālacarita*)'; but since no critical edition of the *Cila.* is available, this has to remain purely speculative.

In spite of the linguistic difficulties of the passage,[251] I consider it legitimate to suggest that the *Bālacarita* ascribed to Bhāsa is referred to here and that we are thus dealing here with a definite source of Southern Kṛṣṇa myth.[252] Also the *kuravai* is danced by Kṛṣṇa *and* his elder brother, and the *āycciyar* dance it as an apotropaic ritual (which indicates a merger of the very similar dances described in the *Bālacarita* and *Pañcarātra*). Allusions to the *Bālacarita* may also be detected in some of the Āḻvārs.[253] Since 'Bhāsa' has been dated third or fourth century AD, this would constitute the *terminus a quo* for the introduction of the myth into the South, and by assuming the sixth century or so as the date of the renaissance works, this would indeed allow for a period of about two centuries during which the myth developed along typically Southern lines.

We may turn to the second feature, the bullfight. While Hv 63, 16 can be ignored here,[254] I would like to draw attention to the fact

[251] According to Asher it is one of the earliest prose passages in Tamil literary history. Now it could be argued that it is a later, medieval gloss which somehow got into the text itself. In this case the crucial phrase can be regarded as in Maṇipravāḷa which is typical of the style of medieval commentaries: (*bāla-caritā-nāṭaka*) *ṅkaḷil*. Both Dikshitar's and Edholm/Suneson's translations do indeed assume this analysis. But I prefer to regard it (with Asher) as a genuine part of the text itself. Another difficulty is *nāṭakam*; but in Southern Sanskrit it has indeed acquired the meaning 'dance' (MTL *sub verbo*, for *Piṅ*).

Ramachandra Dikshitar (1939, p. 229) translates: 'Among the many boyhood games played by Māyavaṉ and his elder brother Balarāma, . . the *kuravai* was one. It was played by Māyavaṉ with Piṉṉai.' In note 2 (ibid.) he identifies this *kuravai* with the *rāsa*, and in note 3 he claims that *nāṭakam* means 'boyhood games'. Edholm Suneson (1972, p. 41, discussion pp. 43f) translate: 'Let us dance the *kuravai* dance consisting of games of Kṛṣṇa's childhood played by Kṛṣṇa and his elder brother . . together with Piññai.' This translation is obviously influenced by Dikshitar's; but while the latter's *kuravai is* one of the games, the formers' *contains* many games. This is linguistically impossible, and the description found in the *Āycci*. does not include mimic representations of such 'boyhood games'.

[252] Edholm/Suneson (1972, p. 44, note 51) doubt this, but their evidence is far too limited. Pusalkar (1941, p. 343) was the first, I think, to draw attention to the passage in the context of the discussion over the 'Bhāsa problem'.

[253] Thus Āṇṭāḷ appears to paraphrase some passages from the *Bālacarita* in her *Tiruppāvai* (see 4.351). TCVir 44 bears close resemblance with v. I, 1 of the drama, which a comparison with Gros, 1968, pp. 182f reveals. See above 2.33 with note 101.

[254] Compare Appendix VIII, note 18. This bullfight consists in letting bulls fight with each other; moreover, there is no clear evidence in the Hv for the assumption

that both in Hv 64, 1ff and *Bālacarita* III, prose after v. 3, the arrival of the bull Ariṣṭa terminates Kṛṣṇa's dance (Bc) or amusement (Hv) with the *gopīs*. Given the existence of a Southern custom in which a bullfight is *concluded* by a dance, it is tempting to speculate that the popular imagination *reversed* the sequence of the myth, in order to make it conform to the custom it knew in real life.

This brings us to the third characteristic feature: Kṛṣṇa's love-making to the *gopīs*, and the eroticism underlying these myths. As we have seen above, there are no parallels in the Northern sources for the *specific* episodes referred to: breaking of the *kuruntu* tree, leaf-frock, stealing of the *gopīs*' clothes, their song in the evening.[255] These must be regarded as Southern developments of the general situation depicted in the *gopī* myth. The custom of bull-baiting implied that a boy thereby gained a bride; once such a myth was conceived of, by its own momentum it would connect Kṛṣṇa's fighting the bulls with a *gopī*, and this girl would then also be included in the *kuravai*. Thus Northern sources are required solely for the explanation of Kṛṣṇa's amorous relationship with the *gopīs* in general. Now it could be argued that again the *Bālacarita* alone would be sufficient for this;[256] but I think this would restrict the influence too much, since the remarks on the *gopīs* in that drama are very vague and ambiguous. Thus it appears more likely that a source like the *Harivaṃśa* also became known in the South,[257] but I am unable to provide any definite proof for this hypothesis. One final point deserves mentioning. Already the classical period had some contact with the Śātavāhana empire,[258] and even during the following centuries Jains in the South (note that the 'author' of the *Cila*. is said to have been a Jain) may have had some knowledge of the Prakrit tradition which knows of Kṛṣṇa, the *gopīs*, and Rādhikā. Although the figure of Rādhikā must be kept separate from Pinnai, the possibility of some influence from *gāthās* dealing

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that what follows is a 'dance'. However, if Hv 63 was known in the South by that early date, popular imagination might have been stimulated by v. 16, as much as by 64, vs. 1ff.

255 I think Hv 63, 24-9 is much too vague to be thought of here.

256 See 2.332, with notes 113 and 115, on a very vague suggestion of Kṛṣṇa's infatuation with the *gopīs*.

257 For the Āḻvārs the evidence is more conclusive; see below 4.342 end and compare 4.441.

258 See above 3.11, note 9, second half.

with her on the treatment of Kṛṣṇa's relations with Pinnai cannot be altogether rejected. Similarly *gāthās* on the *gopīs* in general could have contributed to Southern knowledge. But I cannot provide any conclusive evidence for either of these possibilities.

We may conclude from this discussion that a historical explanation of Southern Kṛṣṇa myths does not require any Northern sources other than the *Bālacarita*, probably the *Harivaṃśa*, and possibly some Prakrit *gāthās* — in other words, all works belonging to the second to fourth century AD. Moreover, specific features of a later date (*rāsa*, *viraha* in Br/ViP) are definitely absent. All this would favour the chronology used above.

3.563 *Popular Kṛṣṇaism in relation to its environment*

The particular context in which we have found the typically Southern Kṛṣṇa myths and which has been called 'popular Kṛṣṇaism', must be differentiated from three other areas which know of Māyōn. It will suffice at this stage to point out its specific features by contrasting them with those other *milieux*. It is clear already from the label 'popular' that this form of Kṛṣṇaism must be kept separate from any royal and dynastic context in which (as we have seen in 3.32; 3.35) Māyōn is associated with Pāṇṭiya (and early Pallava) kingship and where the emphasis is on the majestic god and hero. But a certain link is nevertheless established through the clear awareness of belonging to the realm of the Pāṇṭiyas which is expressed in the concluding stanzas to the *kuravai*; also the many individual references in the *Kali*. poems to the 'majestic Māyōn' (sometimes in conjunction with a reference to the Pāṇṭiya king) may be suggestive of such a link. Whether physically performed or mimically enacted, the bullfight and *kuravai* have appeared as a *ritual* act, in which prayer is combined with song, dance, and music. This feature distinguishes popular Kṛṣṇaism from the temple cult, in which an entirely different kind of formalized worship is offered to the *vigraha*. But *Cila*. 18, 1ff and *Kali*. 123, 4f show that here too certain links exist, just as *Akan*. 59 makes reference to the temple *milieu*. A conscious and intended connection between the *akattiṇai* tradition and folk Kṛṣṇaism is obvious from the material analysed above. But this link is incomplete; although folk religion of Māyōn with its herdsmen's setting could naturally be associated with the *mullai* landscape, the emotions typical of

that *tiṇai* were apparently absent in the erotic episodes known about Kṛṣṇa. Thus our sources produce only superficial solutions to this contrast. (a) At least the epic plot of the *Āycci.*, involving Kaṇṇaki, is structured according to the *mullai uri*; (b) the *gopīs'* song at Kṛṣṇa's return is set in the evening, the time of day associated with *mullai*; (c) vague reference is made to the *mullai* theme 'losing the bracelet' (*Āycci.* 8] c); (d) the 'leaf-frock' episode is inserted in a *pālai* frame, while treated as evocative presumably of *kuṟiñci* (*Akan.* 59); (e) the bullfight poems in the *Kali.* are classified as *kaikkiḷai* by the commentators. Depending on the continuation of the prestige and ideological power of the *akattiṇai* associative structure, such a tension could potentially affect the religious attitudes towards Māyōn, just as during an earlier period Kṛṣṇa mythology was markedly affected by other typically Southern customs and sentiments.

We may now turn to the fourth of the South Indian *milieux* in which Māyōn figures, the temple context.

3.6 Transcendental Māl in the temples: the Paripāṭal

3.61 *Introduction*

Roughly contemporary with the works of the Tamil renaissance which have been discussed above is another context in which we find Māyōn: the sophisticated temple culture which is documented in the Tirumāl hymns of the *Paripāṭal.* This collection belongs again to Maturai. The hymns introduce the conception of a transcendental Kṛṣṇa/Viṣṇu, but harmonize it at the same time with a Southern 'humanism' and other features typical of religion in the South (*inter alia* to envisage the divine within the confines of concrete reality), by means of worshipping a symbolic representation of the Absolute, the temple *vigraha.*

The *Paripāṭal* consists of 22 extant songs by various authors.[259] They fall into three clearly defined groups: love-poems connected with the river Vaiyai, songs dedicated to Cevvēḷ (viz. Murukaṉ),

[259] It is said to have contained originally 70 songs, some fragments of which are quoted by later authors and are included in the printed editions. For a recent discussion of the work see Zvelebil, 1975, pp. 101f (literature in notes 101-8). Zvelebil dates it *c.* AD 350-550.

and hymns addressed to Tirumāl (= Māyōn). The breakdown of the last group which is of interest to our discussion is as follows:

TABLE VIII

hymn	*no. of lines*	*author*
I	65	(not mentioned in the MSS)
II	76	Kīrantaiyār (var.: —nār) (poetess?)
III	94	Kaṭuvan iḷa v Eyinanār
IV	74	the same
XIII	64	Nalleluniyār
XV	66	Iḷam peru Valutiyār
Fr. I	82	(not mentioned)
7	521	

Of all the authors mentioned in the *Paripāṭal*, only two have other works in the *caṅkam corpus* ascribed to them. Yet the nature even of these two correspondences is such that it is impossible to use them as arguments in favour of an early, viz. classical, date for the anthology.[260] In fact, these names would speak in favour of a post-classical date if anything. On the other hand, the fact that the author of III and IV also wrote V, a poem in honour of Murukan, would indicate that the *terminus ad quem* should not be fixed too late, because from about the sixth or seventh century onwards the polarization into Śaivite and Vaiṣṇavite would presumably have prevented this.[261] The fifth or the sixth century AD thus appears as the most probable date for the collection.

[260] The poet of XV is said to have been the author also of *Pur.* 182; but in this poem one of the characteristic features of the *classical* style, the reference to an individual king, is absent. Thus even if the authors are identical, *Pur.* 182 need not belong to the classical period. Āciriyan Nallantuvanār is named as the author of VIII (a song on Cevvēḷ, to be discussed below). A considerable number of poems in the remaining *corpus* are also ascribed to a Nallantuvanār; as far as the poems in the *Kalittokai* attributed to him are concerned, there is no difficulty here, since even if the ascription is correct, this would only speak for a late date. The author of *Nar.* 88 is said to be a Nallantu , but without the *āciriyan*; the author of *Akan.* 43 is specified as coming from Maturai. In both cases, there is no evidence that these authors are identical with the present poet, or that these poems belong to the classical (viz. first to third century AD) period. See Gros, pp. xixf, on the whole discussion.

[261] Note also that the poets of XIV and XXI (both poems of Murukan) have Vaiṣṇava names: Kēcavanār and Nall-Accutanār respectively.

The three major themes dealt with in the anthology are by no means arbitrary, but constitute a well-balanced structural whole. 'Vaiyai' deals with secular life, particularly love, and thus can be classified as *akam*. Both the river as the major *karu* and the recurring theme (the husband's unfaithfulness with prostitutes) as the *uri*, define it as *marutam*. The *akam* element remains partly integrated in 'Cevvēḷ' (particularly VIII, for which see below). In the hymns to Tirumāl the religious character then becomes exclusive. Again, all three groups form a whole in that they all relate to Maturai: the Vaiyai is the river flowing through the town, Cevvēḷ is sung about as the god of Paraṅkuṉram, 'the exalted hill', which lies a few miles to the south-west of Maturai, and Māyōṉ figures prominently as the god of Tirumāliruñcōlai twelve miles north of Maturai.

Fortunately this anthology has been carefully translated and annotated by Gros, so that it is not necessary here to enter into further details. The 521 lines of the hymns dedicated to Tirumāl constitute a veritable storehouse of information about Vaiṣṇavism in the South; only the aspects directly relevant to the present study can be selected here. In addition, song VIII will be analysed, since its treatment of the *akam* complex in connection with Murukaṉ throws some interesting light on the general awareness of Māyōṉ in this milieu.

3.62 *Mythology*

Kṛṣṇa is constantly referred to in the company of Balarāma[262] which reflects the ancient situation; it is only with the Āḻvārs (and in the Br/ViP) that Balarāma disappears. Śaivite elements are attributed to Viṣṇu, e.g., the destruction of *Tripuram*.[263] A whole set of metaphors mention the dark complexion of Kṛṣṇa; these will form the standard repertoire of the Āḻvārs. We hear of his colour like the *pūvai* flower,[264] the sapphire,[265] the ocean,[266] and the rain-cloud.[267]

[262] I, 3-5; II, 20-7; IV, 38-40; XIII, 32ff; XV, 11-3, 21, 55-7.
[263] Fragm. I, 76. In I, 43 Māl is identified with the five-headed Śiva.
[264] I, 6f; IV, 29.
[265] I, 59; IV, 6f; XIII, 2, 42.
[266] IV, 6f; XIII, 42.
[267] IV, 6f; XIII, 9, 42.

It is not possible to investigate the whole range of Kṛṣṇa and Viṣṇu myths further; a full list of all myths alluded to would be quite extensive. But in such a list one major *lacuna* can be noticed: the erotic myths of Vṛndāvana are practically ignored. Gros writes:

L'aspect érotique, la vie pastorale du Vacher de Gokula, . . . , sont absolument ignorés du Pa [ripāṭal]. *Pour justifier ce qu'écrit A.L. Basham (The Wonder that was India, 1956, p. 305) qui voit dans les Anthologies tamoules la plus ancienne référence claire au Kṛṣṇa pastoral car le Noir (Māyōn) 'plays his flute and sports with the milkmaids', sur plus de 530 vers consacrés à Tirumāl, le Pa. n'offre qu'un seul vers . . .*[268]

This one reference is so concise and elliptic, that only with the help of the *Cilappatikāram* can it be identified. In III, 83 it says: *iṭa vala kuta* 'left, right, west (or: vessel)', and Gros identifies this correctly as an allusion to Māyōn's *kuravai* with the milkmaids.[269] We may conclude that the milieu which the *Paripāṭal* represents was aware of those myths that deal with Kṛṣṇa's *amours*, but preferred to ignore them. This raises two further questions: how is Māl conceived of here, and which milieu does the anthology represent?

3.63 *Characterization of Tirumāl*

Though non-erotic myths of the Vṛndāvana cycle are frequently alluded to, the poets are basically interested in other aspects of Māl. He is the One,[270] beyond comprehension,[271] beyond description,[272] beyond comparison,[273] transcending time;[274] he *is* the four *yugas*[275] and the first of all beings.[276] He *is* the universe, the essence

[268] Gros, p. li.

[269] See above, *Āycci.* 9]; Pinnai is standing first to the left of Māyōn, and then to his right. Gros connects *kuṭam* with the 'pot-dance' (see above, 3.524, note 206); but as mentioned above, *kuṭam* can also mean 'west', which I personally would prefer here, since *Āycci.* 6] uses the word in that meaning, with reference to the position of the leading dancer in the *kuravai.*

[270] I, 5.43; XIII, 37.

[271] I, 29f; III, 46-50.

[272] I, 31f. 49-54, 60.

[273] I, 49-54.

[274] II, 16-19; III, 61f.

[275] III, 80ff.

[276] I, 53.

of the universe, the creator, maintainer, and destroyer of the All.[277] All opposites depend upon Him, while he is beyond them.[278] In a word, Tirumāl for these poets is the transcendental, unapproachable absolute. That such a conception of Māyōn is not altogether unknown in our first milieu, viz. folk-culture, is borne out by allusions like: 'Māl of a nature "which is an object impossible to comprehend"' in the *Kalittokai.*[279] Gros characterizes it as '*distant*', '*abscons*'[280], '*abstrait*', — '*et c'est bien en quoi il n'est pas — ou n'est pas encore exactement — le Kṛṣṇa-Gopāla, héros bouvier de Mathurā dansant avec les Gopī*'.[281] This is a totally new language and new awareness in the Tamil tradition. Granted, in the classical *caṅkam* poems, Māyōn was not the human god dancing with the milkmaids either; yet the greatness, power, and 'remoteness' implied in the symbolism of royal political power is very different from the distance of an absolute being beyond human reasoning and at the same time pervading the universe as its life. Again, we may ask, which milieu this grand new conception may be representative of.

3.64 *The milieu of the* Paripāṭal

Caṅkam poetry usually contains references, however stylized, to its social environment; in the classical style, these are in the form of proper names (of kings or chieftains), but even in the post-classical works we could find such references, though of a general nature.[282] Similar references are absent in the Tirumāl hymns, but in a different form they are found in the *Fragments*, and there in syntactical constructions which almost turn them into *geographical* attributes.[283] On the other hand, we notice that this 'slot' is begin-

[277] I, 37-48; III, 63-72; IV, 25-35; III, 63-72; IV, 33-5.
[278] IV, 49-55.
[279] 123, 4: *arum poruḷ marapiṉ Māl.*
[280] Loc. cit., p. lv.
[281] Ibid., p. lvi.
[282] We have come across 'Pāṇṭiya king' both in the *Āycciyarkuravai* and in the *Kalittokai.*
[283] Fr. XII, 2: *Cēy māṭa kkūṭal* 'Pāṇṭiyan Maturai with (high) palaces'; Fr. XIII, 5f: *Neṭiyāṉ/neṭu māṭa kKūṭal* 'Pāṇṭiyan Maturai with lofty palaces'; Fr. II, 46; *Pañcavaṉ Kūṭal* 'Pāṇṭiyan Maturai' (*pañcavaṉ* means literally 'lord of the five (viz. regions of the Tamil country)', see Gros, note p. 303; but see also p. lvii, where *Pañcavar* 'the five (Pāṇḍavas)'.) Fr. II, 71/2 *porunaṉ/tiru marutam* 'Pāṇṭiyan splendid

ning to be filled by a new type of reference, that to a *temple*. Hymn XV illustrates this profusely: *iruṅ kuṉram* (14, 26, 65); *iruṅ kuṉru* (35, 45); *Māl iruṅ kuṉram* (17); *iruṅ kuṉrattāṉ* ('the Lord of I.') (53); *tiruviṟ cōlaiyoṭu toṭar moḻi māl iruṅ kuṉram* 'Māliruṅkuṉram with its name containing "tiru" and "cōlai"' (22-23). Here the name of the temple, Tirumāliruñcōlai or (Tirumāl) iruṅkuṉram, functions like a refrain-word.

Fragment I (5) mentions another temple in Maturai itself, Iruntaiy-ūr, perhaps originally 'village of charcol'.[284] In the Cevvēḷ poems, frequent mention is made of *Paraṅ kuṉram* (which must have inspired the poet of XV to play with *kuṉram* by replacing °*cōlai* by °*kuṉram* and thus creating a parallelism between the two hill-temples of Murukaṉ and Māyōṉ, as *iruṅ* and *paraṅ kuṉram*).

Stylistically we have here the beginnings of a new *genre* of Tamil poetry: that of poems dedicated to *temples*. Most of the poems found in the *Prabandham* and in the *Tirumuṟai* will belong to the same genre. By implication we can say that here the poets' attention and source of *patronage* has shifted from the kings and chieftains to a new cultural (and economic) focus: the temple.

Though it is difficult to say precisely who these new patrons of the poets were, there are nevertheless numerous indications in these hymns of where the answer might lie. I label these indications 'pronounced brahmanism', by which I mean: a general interest in, concern for, and preoccupation with, typical brahmin elements, though there is no evidence that the poets, or even necessarily the 'patrons', were brahmins themselves.

Very frequently we hear of brahmins, Vedas, or Upaniṣads: '(to praise you) is the object of the difficult Upaniṣads (or: Vedas) of the eloquent brahmins';[285] 'morality protected by the brahmins of mighty strength and rich in fame'.[286] The classical heroic poetry

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fields'. In X, 126 the fertile waters of the Vaiyai are compared to the generous Vaḷuti (which may be a reference to any of the Pāṇṭiya kings with that name, or to Pāṇṭiya in general).

284 For various identifications of this temple see Gros, 1968, p. 297.

285 *Nāval antaṇar aru maṟai pporuḷē* (I, 13; II, 57). We probably are not wrong in seeing in *nāval* 'eloquent' something like 'well-chanting'; 'difficult', *arum*, could possibly be connected with 'object', e.g., 'unapproachable, incomprehensible object'. *Maṟai* sometimes refers to the whole Veda, and sometimes only to the Upaniṣads (as clearly in III, 66). The etymology of *antaṇaṉ* is far from clear, but there seems little doubt about its meaning, 'brahmin'.

286 *Viṟaṉ miku viḷu ccīr antaṇar kākkum aṟaṉ* (I, 37-8).

would use identical phrases for a king.[287] But this phraseology may be applied also to the Vedas themselves: 'the Vedas of fame, abounding in glory'.[288] In III, 14 and IV, 65 we read 'the difficult Vedas of the brahmins'.[289] There are many other references to the Vedas: 'of the Veda, you are the *maṟai*.'[290] In Fragment VIII, 7-8, we find the first allusion to the later Vaiṣṇava theology of revelation:

> the voice of him who sings the revelation, the four Vedas, which were born on the tongue of Him who was born (= Brahmā) in the flower [growing in Viṣṇu's navel].[291]

It may well be that this mythological conception is the origin of another Tamil word signifying 'Veda', viz. *vāymoḻi* (literally: 'word of the mouth'); it occurs frequently.[292] It would appear that the Tirumāl hymns contain a much higher proportion of such 'brahmin references' than do the songs about Murukaṉ.

It seems to me that also stylistically these hymns may allude to the Vedas. It would appear that they imitate in their concluding lines a signature line typical of the Gautama family's *Ṛg-Veda* hymns. We may compare: *vayaṃ ta, Indra, viśvaha priyāsaḥ suvīrāso vidatham ā vadema* 'we ever dear to thee, O Indra, with strong sons, would utter divine worship' (*Ṛg V* II, 12, 15 cd)[293] and *bṛhad vadema vidathe suvīrāḥ* 'we would, with strong sons, speak aloud at divine worship' (*Ṛg V* II, 33, 15d)[294] with 'united with our relations who are full of love, our hearts being happy, we praise you, worshipping. . . '[295]

Gros quite appropriately summarizes this poetic attitude:

[287] See Kailasapathy, 1968, p. 231 ff.

[288] *Pukaḻ iyaint' icai maṟai* (II, 63).

[289] *Antaṇar aru maṟai.* Other references to *antaṇar* are II, 68, and XIV, 28 (Cevvēḷ); also Frag. I, 19-20.

[290] *Vētattu maṟai nī* (III, 66).

[291] *Pūviṉuṭ piṟantō ṉāviṉuṭ piṟanta/nāṉ maṟai kkēḷvi navil kural.* 'Revelation', *kēḷvi*, is literally 'that which was heard', and is thus a direct translation of Sanskrit *śruti.* The word occurs also in Frag. I, 19.

[292] E.g., I, 65; III, 11, 12, 93; XV, 63.

[293] Quoted and translated according to Macdonell, *A Vedic Reader*, p. 55.

[294] Op. cit., p. 67; the same phrase also II, 35, 15d (p. 78).

[295] *Kāmaru curramōṭ' oruṅku . . . ēm uṟu neñcattēm paravutum . . . toḻutē* (I, 62, 64, 65); similarly II, 75; Frag. I, 80-2; also XVII, 52; XVIII, 56.

La contrepartie d'une relative désaffection à l'égard de la spéculation purement philosophique et de l'accueil sans réserve d'une tradition sanskrite mise sous le signe du *veda*, c'est l'accent personnel et profond du sentiment religieux. Cet accent personnel est déjà dans l'aspect esthétique du chant: maîtrise des images et belle allégresse des invocations.[296]

It appears now to be possible to define the milieu underlying the Tirumāl hymns in the *Paripāṭal*. Its *locale* is the *temple*, its conception of Māl is that of the transcendental incomprehensible absolute, its cultural roots are as much in the Tamil tradition as in the Vedas, and its centre of orientation are the brahmins, the '*antaṇar* qui ne s'écartent jamais des voies de la Révélation illustre' (Frag. I, 19-20). The striking differences from the other milieu, the 'vulgar' folk-culture reflected in the *Kalittokai*, are clear.

However, the Tirumāl hymns are not just replicas of Vedic-brahmin culture, not even of a theistic, Vaiṣṇava brahmanism. Whatever the borrowings may be, a very distinctly Southern religious spirit pervades these hymns, which deserves to be investigated further.

3.65 *Tirumāl bhakti*

The religious attitude expressed in these hymns cannot be styled 'emotional bhakti' according to our definition. Yet compared with the BhG or even the ViP, the bhakti is clearly 'more emotional', generally speaking. More precisely, we notice a certain emotional intensity on the level of devotion, just as the poems aim at aesthetic beauty.

I shall begin the investigation by quoting a passage from Gros in which he summarizes the religious attitude towards Māl:

> . . . une profonde dévotion s'y exprime: appel à la grâce, *aruḷ* (I, 36, 38)[297], à l'union en Dieu[298] pour le célébrer et l'adorer (conclusion quasi formulaire

296 Gros, op. cit., p. lv; comp. p. liii: '*Ce qu'il faut . . . souligner, c'est que l'emprunt aux sources philosophiques est spécifiquement littéraire: les plus belles images, les plus belles antithèses, les formules les plus recherchées. . . Ce qui est remarquable, c'est qu'elles (=formules) apparaissent, pour la première fois dans l'histoire de l'Inde, dans une autre langue que le sanskrit, et cela avec une admirable perfection formelle.*'

297 See also I, 38 *aḷi* 'gift, grace' and XV, 15 *nalku* 'kindness'.

298 'Union' here must *not* be taken in any metaphysical or mystical sense; the

de chaque poème);[299] appel à l'indulgence de Dieu pour la sincérité des éloges maladroits (beau début de IV, 1-5). La contradiction est douloureusement perçue entre la transcendance infinie, imperturbable, et l'immanence du Dieu sensible au coeur (IV, 53-6),[300] mais est résolue, semble-t-il, dans le mouvement de confiance qui achève le poème (IV, 70-3), espoir repris par le poème XIII où Tirumāl apparaît comme le Dieu de la délivrance (v[ers] 7-13). Mais le vrai désire du bhakta c'est l'attachement perpétuel aux pieds de Dieu[301] pour le louer sans cesse (XIII fin). (...) Plus que le souci de l'acte rituel[302] ou de la connaissance,[303] fût-elle intuitive, c'est parfois l'humble amour de Dieu qui s'exprime. *Mais il faut reconnaître que la bhakti est ici moins anthropomorphe et même moins émotionelle que ne le sera la Kṛṣṇa-bhakti.*[304, 305]

Personally I would formulate as the fundamental framework within which bhakti is realized in the Tirumāl hymns: devotional worship of the god in the temple who yet remains the god of *transcendance infinie*. To arrive at this conception it is necessary to avoid unconsciously interpreting the Tamil phrases metaphorically (even Gros has a tendency to do this). When we read a description like the following, it is to be taken as 'realistic', viz. referring to *the image of the god in the temple*: 'Une guirlande qui contraste avec la couleur de la cascade d'or [the garment] et de joyaux qui descend de cette grande montagne (de saphire) [his body] . . .' [306] There is a great number of such descriptions which are clearly inspired by iconography and the concrete *vigraha* in the temple.

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expressions used in the hymns refer to a concrete attachment in service to the temple-god (see also note 301).

[299] See p. 208 above.

[300] First, the translation has to be more precise; in line 56 the Tamil word used is *maṉam* (< Skt *manas*) and thus 'coeur' and 'âme' (translation *ad locum*) have mystical and emotional overtones which are much too strong. Secondly, this one line 56 is almost the only reference to Viṣṇu's indwelling in the mind; thus seen in proportion, the idea is as marginal to the hymns as are the myths of Kṛṣṇa the lover.

[301] As mentioned in note 298, these expressions have a very concrete significance. Further details will be given below.

[302] This is incorrect; 'ritual acts' *do* constitute one of the major aspects of bhakti here. Details will be given below.

[303] I presume Gros refers here to *jñāna* or yogic meditation. Indeed, contrary to what we find in the Early Āḻvārs, *Viṣṇu-yoga* does not seem to figure in the hymns.

[304] Clearly Gros is using the term to refer to the type of bhakti which we find in the BhP.

[305] P. lv, my italics in the last sentence, and obviously my notes.

[306] XIII, 3 4.

Again, when the poet says: 'living at your feet day by day' (I, 63f), 'worshipping the shadow of your feet' (I, 65), 'we have adored your feet by touching (them with our) heads many times' (II, 72, similarly Frag. I, 5f), these are literal statements similar to 'living at the foot of Iruṅkuṉram' (XV, 65).[307] This is borne out, for example, by the following line: 'on cool Paraṅkuṉram where one worships the feet of Murukaṉ'.[308] Thus to 'live at the feet', 'to worship the feet' of Māl is idiomatic for 'to perform worship of the temple statue'. In fact, Frag. I, 44–5 specifies this further by mentioning some of the paraphernalia used for ritual worship: 'people with food-offerings, umbrellas, and incense, holding flowers, *live at (your) feet* in crowds.'[309]

Within this area of ritual worship we find a fairly rich vocabulary developed, a range of words that will constitute the basic bhakti phraseology of the Āḻvārs. One constantly recurring expression seems to contain the whole range of bhakti as expressed here: *paravutum toḻutu* 'we extol (you) in worship'. It means that ritual acts of worship are combined with songs of praise. Under 'toḻutu', *worshipping*, we can group the following verbs:

toḻu–: to worship, adore, pay homage to (I, 65; III, 19; IV, 2; XIII, 61; XV, 66; Frag. 1, 6).

vaṇaṅku–: to bend, be submissive, perform menial service; thus: to worship, adore (II, 73; Frag. I, 80).[310]

iṟaiñcu–: to fall down, worship by bowing or prostration (XIII, 62).

The following verbs would fall under 'paravutum', *praise*:

paravu–: to pray, praise, extol (I, 64; XV, 66; Frag. I, 6, 81).[311]

ēttu–: to praise, extol[312] (II, 74; IV, 2; XV, 18; Frag. I, 81).

307 *aṭi uṟai* 'living at the foot' is the same phrase as in I, 63 above.

308 *Murukaṉ taṯ toḻu taṉ Paraṅkuṉṟu* (VIII, 81f).

309 *Mataiyar kuṭaiyar, pukaiyar pūv ēnti . . . aṭiy uṟaiyār iṇṭi.* Gros translates *kuṭai* as *paniers de feuilles*; but since 'parasols' (the other meaning of the word) figure frequently among the utensils of popular worship (see 1.43) this is probably what is meant here.

310 See DED 4281.

311 The MTL connects it with *para-* 'to spread' which, parallel to *pukaḻ viri-* 'to spread the fame' (see below), could be explained as 'to make widely known'; DED 3257 on the other hand separates the verbs and has only directly 'to pray, extol. . .'

312 According to DED 739, this is a causative of *ē* 'increase'.

vāl̲ttu–: 'to make live', viz. 'to say "may you live"', thus: to bless, praise, sing songs of benediction (II, 74; XIII, 62).
pāṭu–: to sing (hymns of praise) (III, 29, 30).
icai–: to sing; also: to play an instrument (XV, 64).
pukal̲ viri–: to spread the fame, cause fame to expand. (IV, 3).

The hymns to Tirumāl and the songs to Murukan̲ must themselves be connected with this 'singing': the MSS mention not only the names of the poets, but also the types of melody in which they must be sung and their composers. Thus we are dealing here with a sophisticated expression of bhakti as 'singing the praise of the god'.

When we compare this with the *materia* of folk-religion (which I have briefly sketched above in 1.43 and 3.214), I think the similarities are apparent: acts of worship involving food-offerings, flowers, incense, and parasols, and accompanied by songs and music in praise of the god. Moreover, we may compare *paravutum tol̲utu* with phrases found in the *Āycciyarkuravai* and the *Kalittokai*: 'the god praised in the *kuravai*';[313] 'worship and praise',[314] 'we praise the god of abounding fame'.[315] We could say on the basis of this comparison that both milieux cultivate the element of 'praise', but that in the folk-culture it has the component '(ritual) dance' instead of 'ritual worship'. The *Paripāṭal* milieu, at least in so far as the Tirumāl hymns are concerned, stresses the aspects of a (more elaborate) ritual worship, which is only natural from its temple setting. But just as *Pari.* III, 83 shows the awareness in this milieu of elements typical of the folk milieu, also on the level of 'devotion' the two milieux have some common ground. This does not contradict our initial characterization of the milieu, for the differences are clearly marked.

But let us turn back to the analysis of Tirumāl bhakti. The two components 'worship' and 'praise' are penetrated by another complex which may be styled 'emotional undercurrents'. The following words appear to be typical:

pēṇu-: (II, 19) The MTL gives *inter alia* to worship; to adorn; but from DED 3633 it appears that the other meanings are more original:

313 *Kuravaiyuḷ ēttiya teyvam, Āycci.* 15] 2; compare canto 18, 3-5.
314 *Tol̲utu ētta, Āycci.* 10] 3.
315 *Vil̲u ppukal̲ tteyvam paravutum, Kali.* 103, 76. *Paravutum* occurs also at 104, 78; 105, 72; 106, 48.

	to treat tenderly, to protect, to foster. Worshipping the image is thus seen as an act of 'nursing', 'fostering'.
iyai:-	(I, 64; XV, 65) to be in harmony with, to be attached to.
puri-:	(XV, 63) to desire.[316]
naya-:	(III, 28) to desire greatly, to love.
ārvam:	(I, 34. 38; IV, 2) desire, love, affection.
ēm:	(with *neñcam* 'heart'): (I, 64) pleasure, delight.

While it is hardly possible to deny that we are dealing here with 'emotionalism', we must keep the context in mind: these are attitudes cultivated in relation to Tirumāl's *temple image* as the symbolic representation of the 'incomprehensible absolute'. It is basically 'l'humble amour' and not ecstatic mysticism. When 'heart'[317] or 'inside'[318] is mentioned, this is as the seat of these emotions, of this humble love, and not as Viṣṇu's abode. Yet we find the desire to transcend the symbol and to reach out for the absolute, but it is the mind, *maṉam*, that is involved here. 'You do not possess any other form but the one perceived by the mind.'[319] As we shall see, it will be the Āḻvārs who combine the elements of emotional 'humble love' and apprehending Kṛṣṇa in one's own being, through one's own emotions.

We may now summarize: the Tirumāl hymns express a form of Viṣṇu/Kṛṣṇa religion which has clear roots in the general context of Tamil society and culture, particularly in folk religion; it concentrates its attention on temple worship and along with a pronounced preoccupation with 'Vedism' and 'brahmanism' it brings to bear upon the conception of Māyōṉ the more philosophical conception of an incomprehensible absolute; but the intellectual approach is considerably tempered by the temple worship and by emotional undercurrents.

3.66 *Murukaṉ and the* akattiṇai

However much the roots of Tirumāl devotion may link this milieu with Tamil culture, it cannot be ignored that in other respects

316 Which again seems more original than 'to meditate upon' (*Kuṟaḷ*) etc.; see DED 3518.

317 *Neñcam* I, 64; II, 74.

318 *Uḷḷam* XV, 64.

319 IV, 56: *maṉa kkō ṇiṉakk' eṉa vaṭivu vēṟ' ilaiyē.*

these hymns are clearly moving away from the trends which we have analysed in the previous pages. Not only is Kṛṣṇa the lover, so popular in folk-culture at the same time and in the same general environment, almost totally ignored, but also the whole complex of the *akattiṇai* is excluded from the hymns. This appears logical: the myths of Kṛṣṇa which are ignored and the *akattiṇai* both deal with eroticism, something which was suspect to 'brahmin ideology' (as defined in 1.41). Again, it was only natural for 'brahmanism' (as defined in 3.64) to adopt a poetic style which would formally harmonize with the constant reference to the Vedas, and this in turn would work against the cultivation of the *akattiṇai* style.

All this appears to be restricted to the Tirumāl hymns within the *Paripāṭal*. When we cast a brief glance at the songs to Murukaṉ in the same anthology, we encounter an altogether different situation, since the premises were different. Since some poets wrote both about Māl and Murukaṉ, the difference must be explained by the different mentalities, ideologies, and so on of their patrons, which implies that what was possible in the case of Murukaṉ, was not (yet) achieved with reference to Māyōṉ. Gros characterizes the conception of Cevvēḷ[320] as 'proche', 'concret', as of a '*Dieu jeune homme*', '*populaire et directement sensible*'[321]. This does not surprise us, since as we have seen Murukaṉ has since ancient times been envisaged within the confines of the real and poetical landscape. On the other hand, all the attributes mentioned directly contrast with the characterization of Tirumāl (and for that matter, of Māyōṉ as seen in Tamil folk-culture). The poets of the Cevvēḷ songs in the *Paripāṭal* do not hesitate to acknowledge these links of the god with ancient Tamil culture, and thus their poems do utilize many *akattiṇai* features. Song VIII is the most typical example and we shall briefly analyse it here.[322]

Lines 124-30 provide the general frame in the form of an apostrophe to the hill-shrine of Murukaṉ, Paraṅkuṉram: 'May the abundance that emanates constantly from the fountains . . . be always on you, O cool Paraṅkuṉram!' As purpose for this request is stated:

[320] On this and other names of the god see Gros, p. xlii.

[321] Gros, pp. lvf.

[322] For a French translation see Gros, pp. 44-53; unfortunately Gros leaves out quotation marks on p. 48, from line 83 to 89, which causes confusion. For further remarks see p. xiv, and with special reference to song VIII, pp. xlviif.

'so that people in love [and that is, 'with each other'] may desire the fortified temple of the Lord (Murukan)' [323]
This curious statement is elucidated in the main part of the song, lines 1 to 123:[324] lovers are drawn to Murukan's shrine, and secular and religious love interpenetrate each other.

In the main part, Murukan is addressed and praised by reference to his hill-shrine. Lines 1 to 35 provide an elaborate description of the shrine; for example, in 1 to 11 the hill is compared to the Himalaya because all the gods reside there, to be close to Murukan. Then the poet describes the fragrant southern breeze (*tenral*) which moves from the hill towards Maturai. Lines 38 to 98 introduce the *akam* complex: in the town the breeze listens to the conversations between a lover, his beloved, and their go-between. The setting (agricultural land, city, and Vaiyai river) requires the *tiṇai* to be *marutam* (as in the Vaiyai poems), and thus these conversations concern the unfaithfulness of the lover who betrayed his beloved with prostitutes and who now attempts a reconciliation through the go-between. In a number of places during these conversations reference is made to Murukan and his shrine.

In 38-46, Murukan's hill is seen as the ideal perfect *kuriñci* 'landscape'. The lover in his attempt to pacify his wife, evokes all the past raptures of love-making:

> the unrestrained bliss of making love in the mountain, on a bed of flowers in a grove of mountain ebony, with passions not subsiding. . . (40f)

The hill functions as the *karu*; but lines 45f make it clear that more than a poetic function is intended: 'Cool Paraṅkunram is famous for *granting this bliss*.[325] The religious intention transforms the strict poetic function and adds a causal connection: the bliss of passionate love-making is *the gift of Murukan*.'

In lines 61f, the go-between mockingly repeats the lover's words:

> 'I have touched [as sign of an oath] the foot of cool Paraṅkunram of Vēḷ who grants marriage' so you say. . . .[326]

[323] *Kātalar . . . Celvaṉ kaṭi nakar pēṇa* (lines 125-6).
[324] The connecting particles *eṉav āṅku* 'in this manner', line 124, indicate that what is told in 1 to 123 describes such 'people in love'.
[325] *Makiḻ . . nalkum ciṟappiṟṟē taṇ Paraṅkuṉṟu.*
[326] *Taru maṇa Vēḷ taṇ Paraṅkuṉṟatt' aṭi toṭṭēṉ eṉpāy.*

Thus Murukaṉ also grants marriage, just as lovers would swear by him eternal love.

Finally, the lover suggests a pilgrimage to Murukaṉ's hill-shrine, to appease her with the pleasant prospect, and at the same time to appease the god for his unfaithfulness.

On cool Parankuṉram where[327] one worships the feet of Murukaṉ, we shall cover them (=feet) with many flowers, offer oblations to eat, let [Him] hear music, and raise [the beat of] the *kiṇai* drum.[328]

Thus by going out of the town, to the hill of Murukaṉ, the lover hopes to overcome the *marutam* and find the past *kuṟiñci*, the gift of Murukaṉ.

In lines 90 to 123, the poet takes us back to the hill with the description of Murukaṉ devotees going to Paraṅkuṉram on a pilgrimage.

Other Cevvēḷ songs show similar elements. In IX, 26, Paraṅkuṉram is again said to grant (and not only symbolize) the bliss of passionate love-making of *kuṟiñci*. XIX, 85-94 speak about rites performed for Murukaṉ to be rewarded with a happy married life. XXI, 39-45 lists among the 'beauties of cool Paraṅkuṉram' the love-making of a couple near a pool on the hill. Finally, poem XIV, a prayer to Murukaṉ, opens with a description of the rainy season over the hill-shrine. According to an ancient commentator, these are the words of a friend comforting the lonely, 'separated', girl.[329] Murukaṉ has usurped here the symbolic function that poetics would give to Māyōṉ — to be associated with the rainy season and symbolize *mullai*.

Quite literally we could speak here of a process of 'interiorization' (< *akam* 'interior'), since the 'external' complex, religion (as included in *puṟam*) has acquired the 'interior' dimension of *akam*, viz. human emotions and love. Again, we could describe the achievements of these Murukaṉ poems as bringing to bear upon the associative structure of the *akattiṇai* a (novel) religious spirit; Murukaṉ is not just a poetic function, but the actual giver of what he symbolizes poetically, sexual pleasures. Nothing similar has

[327] ŚSPC edition reads *toḻa* 'in order to'.

[328] *Mika ērrutu malar, ūṭṭutum avi* (< Skt. *havis*), *kēṭṭutum pāṇiy, eḻutuṁ kiṇai — Murukaṉ tāṭ toḻu taṇ Paraṅkuṉru* (80-2).

[329] See Gros, pp. 96f.

been achieved for Māyōn in the Tirumāl hymns (or for that matter, in any other document discussed so far). Compared with the colourful, earthly and sensual world of imagination and emotion depicted in VIII, Māyōn appears indeed as a distant, cool, imperturbable, and rather colourless figure. Contemporary folk-culture conceived of him differently, as we have seen in the *Cilappatikāram* and the *Kalittokai*, in many ways similar to Murukan here. But even there we have found that the classical *akattinai* structure is only externally connected with Māyōn. He is not (in view of Āḻvār bhakti we can say: not yet) 'the giver in a religious context of what he symbolizes poetically' — suffering in separation.

3.7 Summary

We have now obtained a picture of how Māyōn figures in the *caṅkam* works during the first six or so centuries AD. As in the parallel survey of early Northern sources, here too we have had to conclude that emotional bhakti, in the sense of our initial definition, is absent. But the results of this investigation will be essential for the interpretation of the Āḻvārs for whom the material provides background and (contemporary) context in their bhakti. We have acquired here a frame of reference which will allow us to specify the precise nature of the Āḻvārs' contribution to the development of Kṛṣṇa religion, and we shall see that the various disconnected strands which have been inferred from the *caṅkam* works are brought together and harmonized by them.

In the following pages the overall picture will be considered in a more systematic manner. First it will be necessary to deal with a question the discussion of which has been postponed so far, viz. who are Māyōn and Piṉṉai? Secondly, the specific characteristics of the four milieux or traditions in which Māyōn appears will be discussed; thirdly, their religious attitudes are considered, which, fourthly, are related to more general aspects of Tamil intellectual and religious life during the first millennium AD.

3.71 *The identities of Māyōn and Piṉṉai*

3.711 *Māyōn*

Among the various names and titles we have met in the material,

four derivations from the same root stand out: Māyōn, Māyan, Māyavan, and Māl.

Māyōn: *Mat.* 591; *Pura.* 57, 2; *Nar.* 32, 1; *Tolk.* 951; *Kali.* 103, 55; *Pari.* XV, 33; Fr. VIII, 1.
Māl: *Mul.* 3; *Kali.* 52, 5; 123, 4; *Akan.* 59, 6; *Pari.* I, 28; III, 35, 60, 82; XIII, 6; XIX, 57.
neṭu Māl: Cila. 18, 4.
Tiru Māl: *Cila.* 17, 14]a.
Māyavan: *Kali.* 145, 64; *Cila.* 17, 3] 6] bd 8] 10].
Māyan: *Pari.* III, 41.

The basis for these names is the nominal root **mā* 'black', from which we obtain two different stems **mā-y(a)* and *mā-l*. *Māyōn* is a 'conjugated noun'[330]: *mā-y-ōn* 'he who is black'. In that generic sense, the word occurs, e.g., in *Pura.* 229, 27 and 291, 2. Meaning and morphology are well-attested; in *Kuru.* 9, 1 we find the feminine *māyōḷ* 'girl of black (complexion)', and in *Pari.* III, 1.3.10 *māyōyē* 'O you black one!'[331] For *Māyan* and *Māyavan* we have two possible morphological explanations (which yield the same meaning): *Māyan* could either be *māyōn*[332], or we could derive it from the substantive *māyam* 'blackness' (parallel to Araṅkam/Arankan; *aram/araṅ* 'virtue'/'virtuous'). *Māyavan* is best explained as derived from the same substantive *māyam* (parallel to *aram/aravan*). *Māl* is a noun, either an adjective 'black' or a substantive 'a black (-complexioned) person'.[333] The meaning 'black' is clearly brought out by paraphrases like: *māya vaṇṇan* 'he whose colour (< Skt. *varṇa*) is black' (*Patirru.* 7, *pati.*, referring to Māyōn.) or *māl vaṇṇan* 'dto' (4thAnt. 91).[334] On the basis of this evidence it is quite clear that Māyōn, etc., are different Tamil renderings of the Skt. name Kṛṣṇa 'the Black One'.

Unfortunately, things are considerably complicated by the fact that we have two further semantic fields from the homophonous

[330] That is, the *kurippu-viṉai* of Tamil grammar, Andronov's 'personal noun'.
[331] *ōy* is the 2nd sg., *ōn* for the 3rd sg. masc. and *ōḷ* for the 3rd sg. fem.
[332] See Andronov § 70; *-ōn* and *-an* are alternatives of the *kurippuviṉai*.
[333] In the *Prabandham*, we find a *Māl-ōn*, which is the *kurippuviṉai* of the adjective, e.g., Pā|TM I, 8. Moreover, 4thAnt. 65, we have a *Māl-avan*.
[334] Morphologically there is no confusion possible with the *verbal* root *māy* 'to hide' (DED 3946), since a) a negative termination *-ōn* or *-an* does not exist (only *ān*: *māyān* 'he (who) does not hide'), and b) *-avan* requires a stem in *-ātu* (*māy-āt' — avan* 'he who does not hide').

roots *mā* and *māl*. The arrangement of these fields in the MTL is chaotic[335], but the DED is lucid and appropriate. Here we have clearly distinguished:

(1) *mā* 'black' (3918) → *mā-y-am* 'blackness', *mā-l* 'black';
(2) *mā* 'great' (3923) → *mā-y-am* 'height', *mā-l* 'great man';
(3) *māl* 'to be confused' (3950).

Native interpreters have tried to dissociate (1) *māl* from the root *mā*[1] and to establish a simplistic opposition *mā* 'black' : *māl* 'great', which is untenable.[336] Moreover, Skt. *māyā*, which appears in Tamil *inter alia* as *māyam*[337] has created further confusion here.[338] These seemingly unlimited possibilities of interpreting the names of Māyōn were not ignored by the imaginative religious mind. It was soon discovered that by bringing to bear the meanings of Nos. (2) and (3) and of Skt. *māyā* upon them, these names could be given a pregnant theological-religious significance. Kṛṣṇa 'infatuates the mind' (thus: *māl* - No.3), he is the 'mysterious, inscrutable one' (< Skt. *māyā*), and he is 'the great, exalted, transcending being' (- No. 2).[339]

Besides the four names mentioned above, we find a variety of terms, all of which are originally descriptive titles and which have acquired the function of 'names' only through recurrent usage.

neṭiyōn	*Perump.* 402; *Kali.* 140, 8; *Akan.* 220, 5: 'the exalted, great one' (from the same root: *neṭu Māl Cila.* 18, 4).
veyyōn	*Pura.* 56, 6: 'the mighty one'.
celvan	*Akan.* 175, 14: 'he who possesses fortune' (thus - *śrīmān*, which in turn also - Śrī-mān 'who is the lord of Śrī').
nēmiyān	*Kali.* 105, 9.71; 119, 3; 127, 4: 'he who (is armed) with the discus'. 2nd sg. vocative: *nēmiyai* (*Pari.* IV, 9) 'O you (armed) with the discus!'
tikiriyān	*Kali.* 104, 77: 'he who (is armed) with the discus'.
(uyar) koṭiyōyē	*Pari.* II, 60; IV, 36: 'O you with the (lofty) banner!'

335 We find: *māl*[2] 'illusion; blackness'; *māl*[3] 'great man; Viṣṇu'; *mā*[4] 'greatness'; *mā*[5] 'cf. Skt. *māyā* (sic!), blackness'; *māyam*[1] < Skt. *māyā* illusion; blackness'; *māyam*[2] 'height'; *māyan* (*mā*[5] 'black') 'deceitful person'.

336 See Gros, 1968, pp. xlviiif.

337 Compare *Cila.* 17, 13].

338 See note 335 above about the arrangement in MTL.

339 This could be linked with *neṭu-* 'great, exalted' in Neṭumāl; with the Āḻvārs, *perumān*, from *peru* 'great', is the most common title of the god.

As we can see from the contexts in which these names and titles occur, they refer on the whole to Kṛṣṇa (the hero of the *Kṛṣṇa-carita* and the MBh). Even the following expression cannot definitively be linked with the 'transcendental Viṣṇu' : *Tiru maṟu mārpu/aṉ* (*Perump*. 29; *Pari*. I, 36; *Kali*. 104, 10) which we can translate either as '(he with/) the chest marked by Śrī, or as 'marked by the *Śrīvatsa* (tuft of hair)'.[340] This does not mean that the transcendental aspects are unknown. We find the unambiguous *Tiruviṉ kaṇavaṉ* (*Pari*. III, 90) 'husband of Śrī' and *Māyavaṉ mārpiṉ Tiru* (*Kali*. 145, 64) 'Śrī (embracing) the chest of Māyavaṉ'. Also the references to Māyōṉ's reclining on the ocean (*Perump*. 373 and *Pari*. Fr. VIII) allude to that aspect. But what is of importance here is that *the only real name rendered into Tamil* is Kṛṣṇa — 'Viṣṇu', 'Vāsudeva', 'Nārāyaṇa', and so on have no direct Tamil replicas —and that the mythical and doctrinal *contents* of those other names are known in the Tamil sources. We may then conclude that Māyōṉ/Māl . . .~Kṛṣṇa constitutes the focal centre around which the whole complex of Northern Kṛṣṇa-Viṣṇu-Vāsudeva-Nārāyaṇa material is gathered.

How would this relate to the Northern *avatāra* conception? *Pari*. XIII, 6-37 may illustrate this. In line 6, the god is addressed as Māl; then three of his 'manifestations' are referred to: Nārāyaṇa reclining on the serpent Śeṣa in the ocean (26-9), Balarāma with the ploughshare (30-33), and Varāha, the boar-'incarnation' (34-6). In 37 we read: 'O you who are one, dividing yourself by taking on (these) three (different) forms!'[341] Or we can look at the *Cila*. (17, 8]) where 'Māyavaṉ' churned the milk-ocean and then killed Dhenuka. 'Māl' defeated the wrestlers (*Kali*. 52, 5) (~Kṛṣṇa) and 'measured the world' (*Mul*. 3) which refers to the Vāmana *avatāra*. Thus it appears that 'Kṛṣṇa' is used here indiscriminately for both the transcendental Viṣṇu and the 'incarnate' Kṛṣṇa, and moreover also for the other *avatāras*. This situation is not altogether surprising, when we look carefully at the Northern traditions. Even there 'Kṛṣṇa' includes only at a later stage the 'cowherd of Vṛndāvana', particularly as lover of the *gopīs*. Then we have seen that the concept of the *avatāra* evolved because of this new range of

[340] Compare also *Mal*. 356 *Tiruv ār mārpaṉ* 'whose chest holds fortune', as epithet of a chieftain Naṉṉaṉ.

[341] *mūv uruv ākiya talai piriy oruvaṉai*!

mythology (1.423). In the earlier sources, there was no need for such a precise distinction between the transcendental god and his human 'incarnations'. A simple 'to take on the appearance of' or 'to manifest himself' was sufficient to express the relationship between the two aspects.[342] In *Pari.* XIII, 37, *uruv ā-tal* 'to become one of the form/appearance of' corresponds directly to the early Sanskrit terminology. When Kṛṣṇa speaks in the *Gītā*, he *is* basically the transcendental god, and reveals himself as such to Arjuna in chapter XI.[343]

Thus as far back as we are able to trace the Tamil traditions, we are literally dealing with 'Kṛṣṇaism'. This will be the case also with the Āḻvārs. Only under the influence of Yāmuna and Rāmānuja will the Northern schemata of Viṣṇu and his *avatāras* and of Para-Vāsudeva and his *vyūhas* and *vibhūtis* replace the more archaic and simple conception in the South.[344]

3.712 *Pinnai*

We can now turn to the second question: who is Pinnai, Kṛṣṇa's beloved, who is mentioned directly in the *Cila.* and perhaps indirectly in *Pari.* III, 83? It is clear from the context that she is one of the *gopīs*, which has misled certain authors simply to identify her with the Northern Rādhikā.[345] This fanciful explanation is untenable. The analysis of the Northern material showed quite clearly that the dance-episode and the figure of Rādhikā were kept entirely separate up to the tenth and eleventh century.[346] Here on the other hand Pinnai is intrinsically linked with the *kuravai* dance. Kṛṣṇa's bullfight which won him Pinnai is unknown to the early Northern material; but when later Sanskrit texts refer to it, they call the *gopī* Nīlā (BhP Satyā) and not Rādhikā. These

342 See Hacker, 1960, p. 49 with note 1.

343 See note 137, on Uppalavaṇṇa.

344 In 3.38; note 134, I have referred to a mysterious passage in the *Cila.* (22, 89-102 : 37-61) which might indicate that somehow a distinction was made between Māyōn as the royal guardian deity and (Māyōn?) as the deity of the *śūdras*. But the whole passage bears the stamp of a late date; the evidence that Māyōn is also meant in the second passage (as god of the *śūdras*) is not altogether conclusive.

345 Ramachandra Dikshitar, 1937-8, p. 269; Hooper, 1929, pp. 49, 55; adopted, e.g., by Das Gupta III 1940, p. 81. Edholm/Suneson (p. 38, with note 30) compare Rādhā with Pinnai, but do not identify the two figures.

346 I am convinced that stanza 2 in Act I of Bhaṭṭa-Nārāyaṇa's *Veṇīsaṃhāra* (see 2.52: S 21) is the 'exception that proves the rule'.

authors, all from the South, clearly think of two different *gopīs*.[347] Moreover, Pinnai is Kṛṣṇa's wife,[348] while Rādhikā remains his mistress, at least till well after AD 1200. Thus Pinnai in the Tamil traditions is different from Rādhikā in the Northern material.

Who then is Pinnai? We may begin answering this question by analysing her name. Including some of the references to her in the *Prabandham*, we find the following variants:

(1) Pinnai: *Cila.* 17, 6]b_3 8]b 10]1. 3rdAnt. 49, 85; 4thAnt. 33; TCVir 13, 33, 55, 99. TVM VI, 42.5.10; PTM VI, 6, 9.
(2) Piññai: *Cila.* 17, 3]7 6]c_{13} 9]a; also *Maṇimēkalai* 19, 65.
(3) Nam Pinnai: *Cila.* 17 6]d_4 9]b_3.
(4) Nap Pinnai: TPā 19.
(5) Pinrai: *Cila.* 17, 7]11.

While the MTL does not even mention No. 5, for No. 2 it refers back to No. 1 as its variant. No. 3 may easily be explained as 'our Pinnai'.[349] No. 4 is derived by the MTL from *na/nal* 'good' (with the *sandhi* double *p*.) Yet equally well it could be identical with No. 3, since *pp/mp* is a very common dialectical variation in Tamil.[350] Thus ultimately 'Pinnai' is the basic form of the name. Both the MTL and Hooper have suggested an etymology from *pinnu-*[351] 'to plait' (as hair). Also Edholm/Suneson say: 'she who has beautiful plaits'.[352] The MTL has the incongruous *pinnai*[2] '(1) one of Kṛṣṇa's consorts (2) hair', while Hooper (looking only at Nap Pinnai) explains it as 'the one with beautiful hair'.[353] This seems to make little sense.[354] Therefore, I suggest here another

[347] Nellinakar Vātarāyar, in his Tamil rendering of Book X of the BhP, separates also the two dances; in chapter 44 he treats the *rāsa*, and only in 85 does he speak about the *kuravai* in connection with the bullfight. (This information was given to me by Pandit Gopalachakravarthy, Madras.) Compare *Yādavâbhyudaya* IV, 96-99 (bullfight) and VIII, 82-90 (*rāsa* dance); thus also Veṅkaṭanātha treats the themes separately.

[348] E.g., TVM VI, 5, 10; TPā 19; Periyavāccān Piḷḷai's commentary on the TPā, introduction, p. 2. Indirectly, this is borne out by the *Āycci.* through the link with the bullfight.

[349] Parallel to *nam pirān* 'our king/god', *nam pirāṭṭi* 'our queen/goddess'.

[350] Compare *cilampu: cilappu* and *Akan.* 59, lines 17/18 *nappirintu* for *nam pirintu.*

[351] DED 3454.

[352] Op. cit., p. 38.

[353] Op. cit., p. 55, note 2.

[354] Since the basic form is Pinnai, and not Nappinnai, a translation 'a girl with

etymology, deriving the name from *piṉ*[355] 'behind, after'. From this root we find *inter alia* the following derivatives: *piṉṉōṉ*, *piṉṉar*, *piṉṉavaṉ*, 'younger brother', literally: 'the one born *afterwards*'; *piṉṉi*, *piṉṉai* 'younger sister'. In other words, I do not take the word to be a proper name (at least initially), but a generic substantive. *Piṉṉai* in the sense of 'younger sister' may surprise us; but it would agree perfectly with the oldest layer of the *kuravai* (assuming it to be stimulated by Bhāsa's *hallīsaka*): Kṛṣṇa dances along with his elder brother Balarāma and his younger 'sister'.[356] Reference may be made to the famous 'trinity' of Puri: Jagannātha (=Kṛṣṇa), Subhadrā (= Kṛṣṇa's younger sister), and Kṛṣṇa's elder brother Balarāma.[357] In the *Cila.* itself we find further information about Kṛṣṇa's 'younger sister'. Canto XII, which deals with Koṟṟavai (~Kālī), speaks of Nīli 'the younger sister of Māl'.[358] Nīli, 'the black lady' is Kālī 'dto'. Similarly in the MBh we read: 'O (Kālī), younger sister of Gopêndra (= Kṛṣṇa, Gopāla)'.[359] Three lines below she is addressed as Kṛṣṇā.[360] BhP X, 4, 9 speaks of Yaśodā's daughter as *anujā Viṣṇoḥ*, 'Viṣṇu's younger sister' and in verse 13 specifies that she is *devī māyā Bhagavatī* 'the Absolute Goddess, Māyā (= Kālī, Durgā . . .)'. From the MBh[361] we know that Kṛṣṇa's younger sister is *Subhadrā*. In *Cila.* 12 (stanza 22, line 3) Kaṃsa is mentioned as Nīli's *māmaṉ* 'uncle' (=mother's brother). Apart from the curious fact that Nīli should correspond to Subhadrā, the situation seems clear enough.

But to make matters more complicated, we know that already at an early stage a second mythological tradition got mixed up with this. Devī (~Kālī, Koṟṟavai, etc.) is also said to be Kṛṣṇa's

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hair' is clearly nonsensical. Āṇṭāḷ, TPā 19, specifies *pūṅ kuḻal nap Piṉṉai* 'Our (or: good) Piṉṉai with hair (adorned by) flowers', which could at the most be regarded as an *ad hoc* play on the meaning *piṉṉai* 'hair'.

355 DED 3452.

356 Note in *Āycci.* 3] and in *Maṇimēkalai* 19, 65 the parallelity of *piṉ* and *muṉ* ('before'): *tammuṉ āṭiya . . . piṉṉaiyōṭ' āṭiya* 'danced by his elder brother . . . danced along with his younger sister'.

357 See on this Kulke, 1973, where however no reference is made to the Tamil material.

358 Line 68 and stanza 22, line 3: *Māl avaṟk' iḷaṅ kiḷai*; MTL *ad locum* for *iḷaṅ kiḷai* 'young sister' (literally it means: 'young shoot/relative').

359 *Gopêndrasyânuje* MBh 6, Appendix I, 1, line 14.

360 Line 17.

361 I, 61, 2273 according to Sørensen, *anujām Vāsudevasya.*

'elder sister'! The same passage from the MBh quoted above continues: 'O (Kālī), elder sister (of Kṛṣṇa), born in the family of the cowherd Nanda!'[362] Already Bhāsa (*Bālacaritam* Act I) calls Yaśodā's daughter Kartyāyanī (-Kālī). Also the Jain tradition knows this connection between Devī and Yaśodā's daughter.[363] That this Nīli is in fact our Pinnai is borne out by the fact that in Sanskrit texts *pinnai*/*Pinnai* appears as Nīlā. We can compare:

(1) TVM VI, 4, 2: Śrī – Bhū – 'cowherd girl'
TVM VI, 5, 10: Śrī – Bhū – Pinnai
PaP VI, 254, 73: Śrī – Bhū – Nīlā (also 265, 39).

(2) TPā 19 : *nap Pinnai koṅkai mēl* 'on the breasts of Pinnai'
Taniyan: Nīlā-tuṅga-stana- . . . supta- 'sleeping on the high breasts of Nīlā.[364]

(3) All the evidence collected in 3.52 about Pinnai in connection with the bullfight and the *kuravai*, and the Sanskrit works which refer to Nīlā in these contexts.[365]

While we can assume here that *pinnai* = Subhadrā = Nīli = Nīlā = Kālī, this by no means implies that either the author of *Cila*. 17 or the Āḻvārs were still aware of these correspondences. The fact that they treat Pinnai as a proper name would suffice to contradict such an assumption, quite apart from the erotic relationship they indicate for Kṛṣṇa and Pinnai, although as Yaśodā's daughter she would only be his 'step-sister'. Also for sectarian reasons the Āḻvārs would have found any connection between Kṛṣṇa and Kālī impossible. It is symptomatic that in the TMāl 10 Jyeṣṭhā, 'Kṛṣṇa's elder sister' (= Kālī) appears as Cēṭṭai 'the goddess of misfortune'. We can thus assume that certainly by the fifth or sixth century Vaiṣṇavas in the South had altogether forgotten about the literal meaning of 'pinnai' and her identity. It is then another

[362] *Jyeṣṭhe Nanda-kulôdbhave*; compare MBh 4, Appendix I, 4C, lines 3-4: *Yaśodā-garbha-saṃbhūtām . . . Nanda-gopa-kule jātām* '(Kālī) who came to life in Yaśodā's womb and was born in the family of the cowherd Nanda'. Compare *Śiśupālavadha* 18, 50: Cāṇḍikā (~Kālī) arose out of the body of Nanda's daughter whom Kaṃsa had smashed to death on the rock.

[363] See Alsdorf 1936, pp. 23f; 53f; 54 note; 241–3; 362.

[364] This first *taniyan* (verse of praise) of the TPā is ascribed to Parāśara Bhaṭṭa (12th century AD).

[365] See Appendix VIII, note 16. Edholm/Suneson, p. 52, who judge from a considerably more limited source material, hesitate to identify Pinnai with Nīlā. This hesitation, I think, is unjustified.

question, whether from this stage onwards the figure of Rādhikā known to the Northern sources could have influenced the mythical conception of a love-relationship between Kṛṣṇa and Piṉṉai (transmitted perhaps through Jain acquaintance with the Prakrit tradition).

3.72 *Kṛṣṇaite traditions and milieux*

3.721 *The royal court*

One of the remarkable results of the previous investigation is the fact that the vast majority of our sources belongs to Maturai. The other two kingdoms of the classical Tamiḻ-nāṭu, the Cōḻa and the Cēra, appear almost in no way connected with Māyōṉ. For the early period, Māyōṉ (in a rather obscure manner) is linked with the Pāṇṭiya dynasty and with the royal power of the king; in the *Pari.* the town Maturai is given a cosmic significance through Viṣṇu mythology, and its very name would point to the Mathurā of Kṛṣṇa. Even in the *Cila.* the association of Maturai, the Pāṇṭiya, and Māyōṉ is expressed (particularly in cantos 17 and 22). All this must not be taken naively to mean that the Pāṇṭiyas were 'Vaiṣṇavites'; this would be a fatal anachronism since for the period up to the sixth century such a polarized category is meaningless.[366]

We can infer the significance of this particular association of the Pāṇṭiyas with Māyōṉ only indirectly. One factor involved is that the 'royal symbolism' of Māyōṉ allowed for a considerable impact on the temple-culture, at the time when the transition from the 'palace' to the 'temple' took place.[367] Secondly, it is probably not accidental that the folk-culture around Maturai, which expresses its loyalty to the Pāṇṭiya kings, is also influenced by Kṛṣṇaism. But most important of all is a third factor. The Tamil renaissance, which took place in Maturai, possessed a particular Kṛṣṇaite flavour, evinced, for example, by the many references to Māyōṉ

[366] See below 3.74, pp. 235f.

[367] I have mentioned as symptoms for such a transition: the change in meaning of the words *kōyil* and *nakar* (palace → temple), the shift in bardic patronage, and phraseological parallels like 'the unending fame', a typical attribute of the classical king, which in the *Pari.* is used with reference to the god, his temple, and the Vedas. Compare 3.55, 3.64 above, and Appendix X (*Cila.* 12]).

in the *Kali.*, presumably because it drew heavily upon that folk culture. The overall awareness of 'Tamilness', as a focus of national and cultural identity, had definite links with the classical *caṅkam* cosmos and with Māyōṉ. It manifests itself even in some later Āḻvārs, for whom it provides the background (we may even say stimulus) to their remarkable religious and poetic achievements. Clearly the initial association of the Pāṇṭiyas with Māyōṉ remained highly influential for many centuries on the development of Southern Kṛṣṇaism, affecting milieux other than the royal court.

Surprisingly enough, we know from an early work (the *Perump.*) that in a kingdom which on the whole lies beyond the *caṅkam* horizon, viz. Kāñcīpuram, Māyōṉ also figured in connection with the royal court and was worshipped in a temple there. This early reference is interesting because for the next three hundred years or more we hear nothing about this kingdom, until the Early Āḻvārs make their appearance here. However limited the evidence from the *Perump.* may be, it provides us with a background to the Northern or Early Āḻvārs, just as the other, much more informative, *caṅkam* sources illustrate the cultural and religious environment of Nammāḻvār, etc. As we shall see, this allows us to evaluate the Āḻvār movement much more appropriately than would otherwise be possible.

3.722 *The temple*

Without a precise chronology of our sources it is very difficult to assess the Tamil renaissance in Maturai and the shift of accent from the palace to the temple in relation to each other, and in turn the developments of a Kṛṣṇaite folk culture in relation to both these phenomena. The fact is that at a certain stage in Pāṇṭiyan history the temple, with a pronounced 'brahmanism', emerges as a focus of religion. Whatever the common ground with other areas of Kṛṣṇaism, the temple milieu is in certain respects quite distinct. Totally new features, derived from Sanskritic culture and religion, are introduced from it into the Tamil context. Yet there are two opposite ways in which one can interpret the Tirumāl hymns in relation to these innovations. One way would be to see in them the first signs of a move to integrate Sanskritic attitudes into the Tamil environment. But the other way of looking at it would be to see in them the symptoms of a 'centrifugal' drive away from traditional Tamil culture towards Sanskritic brahmin

culture and ideology. We cannot reconstruct the way South Indian circles chose to look at those hymns, nor can we decide — for want of a precise chronology — whether the Tamil renaissance could be regarded as a reaction against such a centrifugal drive. Nevertheless, it is clear from the Āḻvārs that Kṛṣṇaism in certain areas became much more 'Tamil' while at the same time the temple culture stimulated even new poetic 'landscapes'. Beginnings of such a poetic awareness centering on the temple are already found in the present material, viz. in those poems that are 'dedicated' to a particular temple (*Pari.* XV; VIII; *Akan.* 59). Particularly *Pari.* VIII outlines a structure not unrelated to that found in the Āḻvārs.

3.723 *Folk Kṛṣṇaism*

As part of the Tamil renaissance, segments of society which till then had been generally ignored by the poets, due to the norms of classical poetics, make their appearance in literature. Through this change in literary taste, we have come to know of a folk-culture which is familiar with erotic episodes of Kṛṣṇa. We can infer from *Pari.* III, 83 that even the temple milieu was not unaware of this culture, but preferred to ignore it. *Mat.* 590ff shows that already at an earlier date Kṛṣṇaism was known to the lower strata of society, but we cannot tell whether the *gopī* episodes were known as well. The fact that in the *Āycci.* two poems (13] and 14]) are interpolated[368] which bear very close resemblance to some poems by the Āḻvārs might give rise to the assumption that it was out of this folk-culture that the Āḻvār movement originated. Such an assumption is far from the truth. As we shall see, it is only towards the end of the Āḻvār period that their 'movement' penetrated into such strata of folk-culture, and then on somewhat different premises; in spite of the popular romantic mythos that the Āḻvārs were the representatives of the 'masses', fighting in protest against an 'ever-growing feudal oppression of the masses',[369] most of them were 'elitists'. However, we may keep in mind that already during, and even before, the fifth or sixth century there was a milieu in the South which was familiar with the amorous adventures of Kṛṣṇa and which attracted the attention of the renaissance *literati.*

[368] See Appendix X on these poems, my reasons for dating them later than the sixth century AD, and the parallels with the Āḻvārs.

[369] Quoted by Zvelebil, 1973, p. 190.

3.724 *The* akattiṇai *tradition*

In many ways cutting across the different milieux and continuing to function throughout the period discussed here, the *akattiṇai* system constitutes a distinct tradition in Tamil culture, but remained marginal to the present sources of Kṛṣṇaism. Using the term in a general sense, we could say that the representatives of this tradition are the 'literati', the educated class. As such their influence would extend to the court, the temple, and to less educated people. Education and culture are intrinsically linked with the Tamil renaissance, which in turn is the conscious revival of the *caṅkam* tradition. The impact of this is indicated, for example, by Āṇṭāḷ, who explicitly tells us that she is writing poetry in *caṅkam* Tamil[370] and High Tamil[371] and in pure Tamil.[372] The language and poetic style of the *caṅkam* are the highest cultural norm, and the object of education. Moreover, I have used above the term 'associative structure', by which I mean a system of symbols that would allow spontaneous 'association' of phenomena with given emotional implications. It has become clear now that due to the position of the *caṅkam* tradition in Tamil society the *akattiṇai* system could be expected to function as such an 'associative structure' even after the sixth century AD (the date assumed here for *Cila.* and *Kali.*).

Although this structure provided a clearly defined function for Māyōṉ, it is striking that nowhere in the material analysed so far is Māyōṉ (as a religious figure) treated so as to fulfil this function. This is remarkable not only because *Pari.* VIII does illustrate such a treatment for Murukaṉ, or because one would somehow feel that the whole complicated structure of Tamil religious and poetic awareness, by its inherent momentum, 'ought to have resulted in it', but also in view of the poetry of the Āḻvārs, which does conceive of Māyōṉ in that manner. We can point out various reasons why this integration has not (yet) been achieved. (a) As I have tried to show, Māyōṉ was not original to the Tamil environment and the process of integrating the whole complex must have taken consider-

[370] *Caṅka ttamiḻ mālai*, TPā 30.

[371] *Cen tamiḻ*, NTM IX, 10.

[372] *Tūya tamiḻ*, NTM VI, 11. Already the Early Āḻvārs pride themselves because of their Tamil: 2nd Ant. 1.74; 4th Ant. 81. On Nammāḻvār see 4.324.1.

able time. (b) While Murukaṉ was originally not a *karu* and while this poetic function defined only a limited aspect of his importance in Tamil society, so that the other aspects could almost automatically be brought to bear upon this limited function, 'Māyōṉ' was solely defined as *karu* by the poeticians. Only when they became aware of him in other respects as well could his limited function be extended. (c) 'Māyōṉ' fitted quite well into the *external* side of the *mullai* landscape (as the *cowherd*). But how to relate him to the *emotional* side, the *uri* of *mullai*? Murukaṉ, as the god of youth and blissful love-making presented no difficulties for *kuṟiñci*; but the South at this stage was unaware of any 'suffering in separation' in connection with Māyōṉ religion.

The various stages of Māyōṉ's integration into the texture of Southern religion and culture have been traced in detail above and need not be repeated here. By the end of the period, three positions of partial integration can be distinguished. (a) A fully religious awareness of Māyōṉ integrated into Tamil culture, but excluding the *akattiṇai* (*Paripāṭal*). (b) A functional usage of Māyōṉ as *karu* in the *akattiṇai* (postulated by *Tolk.* 951, and realized in *Mul.*, *Akan.* 59 and 175). (c) Māyōṉ as god in folk-culture, appearing in the *mullai* landscape but without the typical *mullai uri* (*Āycci.* and *Kali.*). As we shall see it is Nammāḻvār who will achieve the overall integration of Māyōṉ and the *akattiṇai*, envisaging the god in the *mullai* landscape and relating its *uri* to bhakti (along with a marginal extension of the *uri* also into the *gopī* myths). To explain the achievement of Nammāḻvār we must assume that the *akattiṇai* was still functioning as an 'associative structure' in the seventh or eighth century. In other words, the material analysed so far has by no means exhausted the importance of the *caṅkam akattiṇai* for the developments of Kṛṣṇaism in the South. The poetic 'landscapes' which the Āḻvārs will create have their direct roots in this *akattiṇai*.

3.73 *Religion*

Above (3.21) I have listed some aspects which in my opinion illustrate the religious awareness typical of the Tamil South. I mentioned the conception of the 'divine' as something present within the confines of ordinary reality. The 'temple' was referred to as a sophisticated development of this attitude. The actual

temples mentioned in the present material are not very numerous.[373] We hear of a temple in Kāñcī, most likely Tiruveḫka, in the *Perump.*, and of Tirumāliruñcōlai near Maturai (in the *Pari.* and *Cila.*[374]). Inside the city itself and on its outskirts were Iruntaiyūr (*Pari.* Frag. I, 5) and Irunta Valam Uṭaiyār (*Cila.* 18, 4).[375] The import- and temple North of Kāñcī, Vēnkaṭam, is mentioned in the *Cila.* (11, 4), and finally the same epic refers also to a temple in Kerala, Āṭaka-māṭam 'The Golden Hall' (*Cila.* 26, 62)[376]. The fact that the *caṅkam* sources mention only six temples does not mean that the remaining ninety or so which are referred to by the Āḻvārs must have been built after the sixth century. Many of them certainly were, but the basic difference is that with the Āḻvārs it is a special feature of their religion to move through the country from one temple to another. This the late *caṅkam literati* do not seem to have done.

The best example of conceiving of the divine as present in the temple and in ordinary reality is *Pari.* VIII, where the Murukaṉ of Paraṅkuṉram is an integral component of the *akattiṇai.* We have seen that for Māyōṉ a similar integration has only partially been achieved. But, excluding the *akattiṇai*, we can say that Māyōṉ as the god of the temple, is conceived of in the same manner. I have pointed out (see 3.65) that however 'transcendental' Tirumāl may be, his 'presence' in the temple added a particular flavour to his bhakti.

The dance as another form of religious expression has been discussed above (3.214 and 3.563); while the older period is familiar with various kinds of *kuravai*, a *mullai* or Māyōṉ *kuravai* appears rather late. Moreover, as a Kṛṣṇaite dance it seems to be lacking in some of the typical features of the other types of *kuravai*, like the 'frenzy', 'possession', ecstasy and drinking of intoxicating liquor. But it is worth keeping in mind that according to the general religious spirit of the *caṅkam* age and culture extraordinary states of con-

[373] Compared with the ninety-five or so temples known to the Āḻvārs, and many more to the Nāyaṉārs.

[374] 11, 91 *Tirumāṟkuṉṟattu* 'on the hill of Tirumāl'; the commentator calls it Aḻakarmalai.

[375] This only according to the commentators; they mention also a second name for this temple, Sundaravāṉatt' Emperumāṉ (p. 418). See Gros, p. xxviii who suggests that it might be the Kūṭal Aḻakar temple to which some of the Āḻvārs refer simply as Kūṭal.

[376] The commentators (p. 542) equate it with Tiruvanantapuram and Iravipuram.

sciousness are closely linked with forms of religious experience. It will then not surprise us to encounter similar ecstatic features in the bhakti of some of the Āḻvārs. The poetic structure of the poems in the *Kalittokai* which have been analysed above illustrates this same fundamental religious attitude: the events of 'real life' (the bull-fight and the *kuravai*) are not only treated poetically, but are, at the same time, envisaged as evoking episodes in Kṛṣṇa myth. This is also exemplified in the *Āycci.*, where the dance of the (epic) cowherdesses is the ritual enactment and concrete representation of the mythical dance of Kṛṣṇa.

Turning back to the concomitants of worship, the material presented here has amply illustrated the use of artistic means involving emotional enjoyment. Music and song, which were mentioned as a typical ancient feature of Southern religion have appeared time and again. The hymns to Tirumāl are sophisticated poetic creations set to art music, in the *Kalittokai* we find folk-songs 'praising the god' to the accompaniment of drums, and similar songs are sung in the *Āycci.* The same applies to the utensils employed in worship, like flowers, incense and lamps.

I think it is quite appropriate to say now that the major characteristics of Tamil religion are found in the religion of Māyōṉ as documented in the present sources. Yet I have already pointed out above that ultimately this complex labelled 'Tamil religion' loses a considerable part of its specific identity when we compare it with Indian folk religion in general (1.43). The most important characteristic of the situation in the South is that, quite contrary to the Northern developments (which for our purpose would include Jain and Buddhist developments in the South) we find here an integral fusion of common Indian with specifically Tamil folk-religion, and of brahmanized temple religion (exemplified by the Tirumāl hymns in the *Paripāṭal*) with Kṛṣṇa-bhakti. Exaggerating somewhat, we could say that these trends ran contrary to the developments in the North where the Upaniṣadic ideology tended to absorb and obliterate all other forms of religion. As we shall see, only with Rāmānuja and his school will the normative Sanskritic system gain a dominant position. Āḻvār religion retains the earlier situation as its foundation and source of inspiration.

But we must, and can, be more precise. To point out the similarities can be only part of our interpretation. I have spoken of the 'absence of a clear awareness of "transcendence"' which made

it possible both to envisage and approach the 'divine' in concrete terms, within the confines of ordinary reality. This is precisely the point at which the Tirumāl hymns differ from the ancient religious spirit. Along with (and we may say, due to) the pronounced 'brahmanism' expressed in these hymns we find the conception of Māl as the *transcendental* god. In other words, it is at this point that a clear awareness of transcendence is introduced into Tamil religion. The contemporary sources from milieux other than that of the temple do not (yet?) reflect the impact of this innovation, except for minor allusions, e.g., *Kali*. 123, 4, and one could ask from which of these two areas the further developments will derive their inspiration. As we shall see, such a question is too simple to do justice to the Āḻvārs; nevertheless, it can be said at this stage that the Āḻvārs have close affinity with this 'transcendental awareness'. According to archaic religious understanding, 'god lived in the *kaṭampu* tree' (e.g., *Perump*. 75) and the necessity for an abstraction arose only through the fact that there were many such trees in different villages, but one Murukaṉ. We have no evidence that this was ever felt to be a problem, nor do we know how precisely the ancient Tamil would have conceived of the relationship between the one Murukaṉ and the many trees. With Māyōṉ this was not so easy, since one was aware that Kṛṣṇa danced the *kuravai* in Āyarpāṭi (= Vraja)[377] and sported with the *gopīs* 'on the banks of the Yamunā in the North'.[378] It was clear that here a difference in space and time was implied, which means that dancing the *kuravai* could only be a 'symbolic representation' of something that took place 'really' in a different area and at a different time. Moreover, as the absolute, Māl was conceived of as 'beyond comprehension', 'beyond description' and 'beyond comparison' (see 3.63) who yet 'took on different forms' (*Pari*. XIII, 37), although only the mind could perceive anything like his 'real form' (see 3.65). Māl is present in the temple, more precisely in the 'idol', and yet he transcends this symbolic representation just as he transcends the symbols of human thought. In other words, the 'presence of the divine within the confines of concrete, ordinary reality' has turned into a 'presence by means of symbolic representation', which involves a tension between the actual presence and Māyōṉ's

[377] See *Cila*. 17, 3].
[378] *Akan*. 59, 3/4.

transcendence. While the first factor, Māyōn's presence, can be related to typical Tamil religious awareness, the second factor, Māyōn's being removed in space and time (in myth) and transcendent (in theology), is involved in the very nature of the Māyōn material as Northern and in the new awareness of transcendence that enters into Tamil religion. This means now that the Āḻvārs encounter a dialectical structure, and we shall see how they develop it. The notion of symbolic representation will be quite essential for the interpretation of their bhakti. As far as the present material is concerned, both the *kuravai* dance and the temple image have appeared as such symbolic representations.[379]

3.74 *Kṛṣṇaism in Southern culture*

Above (in 3.2) I discussed briefly the relationship between a 'secular humanism' and 'religio' in classical Tamil society. In the light of the present material, we may be able to elaborate on this point. Probably the most striking example of such 'secular humanism' is the *Kalittokai*. It seems hardly exaggerated to see in the emergence of this 'vulgar' work of art a symptom of the classical spirit breaking through the suffocating negatives of Jain and Buddhist ideological pressures. On new premises (the classical élitism is abandoned), 'man of flesh and blood' [380] asserts himself to live out a fully human life. But there are other, though less spectacular, examples for the re-emergence of the same 'anthropocentric' attitude. The fact that devotion to Tirumāl in the *Paripāṭal* counterbalances the austere character of the 'remote, transcendental' god by integrating folk religion and temple ritual with all its sensuous and affective features, could be interpreted in this manner. The strong intellectualism, with its world-negating tendencies, which since the BhG has been associated with Kṛṣṇa-bhakti and *bhakti-yoga* and was imposed on the *gopī* myth in the Br/ViP, is absent here. The worship with 'a leaf, flower, fruit, and water' which Kṛṣṇa alludes to in the *Gītā* (IX, 26) in one single line as the lowest form of devotion, provides in the *Paripāṭal* the very structure of man's approach to Māl. *Paripāṭal* VIII, by its perfect integration of *akam* and Murukaṉ religion (which in a much more limited manner *Akan*. 59 expresses,

[379] Compare above 2.323 on Hv 63, 24-29, where I have pointed out the possibility that the 'symbolic structures' may be due to Kṛṣṇa's physical absence.

[380] Zvelebil, 1973, p. 18.

too), is a further example of the same positive attitude to this world. Since all these sources belong to what I have styled the 'Tamil renaissance in Maturai', we can say that besides a formal revival of *caṅkam* poetry, the conscious or unconscious return to the classical ideal of the 'full man' is an important aspect of that renaissance.

However, it would distort the evidence if 'humanism' or 'anthropocentrism' were simply taken in their Western meaning. The material collected above[381] shows that even during the age of the *cāṉṟōṉ* 'religio' was more than just 'reflections of tribal cults and their survivals'.[382] The term 'humanism' is justified when by it is meant a reaction against an ideology that negates some of man's faculties on the basis of certain religious presuppositions (like the concept 'impurity', viz. *āsrava*[383] and *kleśa*[384]). With reference to these conceptions, 'humanism' or 'anthropocentrism' would constitute the assertion of 'being oneself' (*bhava*, *asmitā*), of the 'élan vital' (*abhiniveśa*), of basic human instincts like desire and passion (*kāma*, *rāga*). In terms of Jain, Buddhist or Yoga doctrine such an assertion would indeed exclude 'religio' since all these notions like *bhava*, *asmitā*, and so on, possess a negative value, but not in terms of the classical Tamil awareness. The Tirumāl hymns are the most obvious example of a truly religious preoccupation, but even the poems from the *Kali.* or the *Āycci.* show a pronounced religious (viz. Kṛṣṇaite) interest. 'Religio' is clearly part and parcel of Tamil folk culture, from which the Tamil renaissance has drawn some of its inspiration. This *religious* humanism will be fundamental to Āḻvār religion.

We have seen (3.212) that already in the classical age the figure of 'Murukaṉ' provided a focus around which both the *cāṉṟōṉ* and the common man, both humanism and 'religio', could gather to form an integral whole, 'Tamil society'. This seems to be borne out also by the '*kuravai*' in the older sources, by *Pari.* VIII, (and

[381] See above 3.21.

[382] Zvelebil, 1973, p. 21.

[383] In Buddhism this refers to *kāma*, *bhava*, and *avidyā* 'desire, self-awareness, and ignorance.' See Frauwallner, 1953, pp. 170, 182, 190-7. In Jainism, it refers to the influx into the soul of particles of matter that enchain the soul due to any physical or mental activity; see Frauwallner, op. cit., pp. 253f.

[384] This refers in the Yoga-system to *avidyā* 'ignorance', *asmitā* 'ego-consciousness', desire and hatred, and *abhiniveśa* 'élan vital'; see Frauwallner, 1953, p. 423.

other Cevvēḷ poems) and *Akan*. 59. One could say that Murukaṉ figures here as a central symbol of national and cultural awareness. The material concerning Māyōṉ has revealed the difference in his treatment. First, we have no evidence that 'Māyōṉ' provided such a focus in the classical period. Secondly, our sources have shown a chronological development — only during the era of the renaissance does the material become extensive.[385] Thirdly, for the whole period under discussion, Māyōṉ's connection with the *akattiṇai* has remained on the whole theoretical normative, but not realized in poetry. Moreover, the rationale underlying the polarization of Southern religion is obscure. It is an open question whether the increasing momentum of Māyōṉ religion was bound to lead ultimately to a polarization (in other words, that the emergence of a second symbol of cultural and national identity by its own logic had to result in a partitioning of the identity itself), or whether the sectarian outlook of some of the *Purāṇas*, *Āgamas*, and *Saṃhitās* was responsible for these developments. To make matters even more complicated: while 'Māyōṉ' contains 'Viṣṇu' (as shown above), Murukaṉ is quite distinct from Śiva. The latter, though not totally unknown in the *caṅkam* corpus, figures so marginally that he is not even mentioned in *Tolk*. 951. The question how *Śivaism* established itself in the South, and how the polarization, which the Āḻvārs and Nāyaṉārs illustrate, became that of Māyōṉ: Śiva, is one of the major unsolved problems of Southern religious history.

Nevertheless it seems possible to assume from the nature of the polarization (Māyōṉ: *Śiva*) that the Northern, sectarian texts (with their polarity Viṣṇu: Śiva) must have been responsible, though probably not exclusively, for the Southern developments. Yet it is clear that in spite of some attempts to contain Māyōṉ and Murukaṉ in one integrated structure, 'Māyōṉ' evolved as a religious, national and cultural symbol (parallel to Murukaṉ in older Tamil society) only for *one segment* of Tamil society, viz. the medieval 'Vaiṣṇavas'.

I shall conclude this general evaluation of the *caṅkam* sources by suggesting a flight of fancy which may be helpful in under-

[385] What has been said above, 3.721 and 3.724, about Māyōṉ as symbol of cultural identity (during the renaissance period) and 'national awareness' (in the classical era) has a clearly restricted application, viz. to the Pāṇṭiyas of Maturai. The symbolic function of Murukaṉ applies to the whole of Tamil society.

standing the dynamism underlying the very complicated developments that we have encountered. Although time and again 'Murukaṉ' has been referred to as the central symbol of Tamil awareness, it seems possible also to speak of a form of 'polytheism' found in Tamil society. If we abstract from the chronological sequence, and if we include under the label of polytheism both the possibility that various gods are parallel to each other and that they appear in a hierarchical functional structure, some of the material may be called 'polytheistic'. Already in the ancient poetry the king may be praised as the heroic Māyōṉ, and yet Murukaṉ is the god of war. The ancient name of Maturai is Nāṉmāṭakūṭal '(The place where) the four temples join'; they are the temples of Māyōṉ, Durgā-Koṟṟavai, Śiva, and the Virgin (Kaṉṉi).[386] The *Paripāṭal* combines hymns to Murukaṉ and Māyōṉ, and one poet (Kaṭuvaṉ Iḷav Eyiṉaṉ) wrote poems for both gods. When the Pāṇṭiya king commits the crime of killing Kōvalaṉ, the four guardian deities of the four castes abandon the town (Brahmā, Māyōṉ, and Śiva are actually alluded to).[387] When the bulls are driven into the pen for the 'bullfight', the poet compares them to Māyōṉ, Murukaṉ, Balarāma and Śiva.[388] In non-Vaiṣṇava circles, Koṟṟavai is remembered as Kṛṣṇa's sister,[389] while Murukaṉ is said to be the nephew of Māyōṉ (as son of Koṟṟavai, who is Kṛṣṇa's sister, Māyōṉ is his mother's brother).[390] In all these cases we could speak of the awareness of a complementary pattern, a 'polytheistic' conception. In such a structural whole, each god could maintain his specific characteristics, and the individual member of the society could turn to any god according to the occasion, his moods and predilection. Murukaṉ would be the 'close' this-worldly god of love, war, and beauty, and Māyōṉ would remain the remote, transcendental god, at least in the temple milieu. But when this structural whole disintegrated and was replaced by a polar structure, the individual member of society was left with only one segment. The result was that now the 'Śaivites' had an attractive, earthly god of love (Murukaṉ), while the 'Vaiṣṇavas' were left with an emotional blank. A tendency to fill such blanks according to the

386 See Gros, 1968, pp. xxviif.
387 *Cila.* canto 22.
388 *Kali.* 104, 11-38.
389 *Cila.* canto 12.
390 See Gros, 1968, p. xlvii.

earlier structure would then be only natural. Perhaps already verbal plays like *iruṅ*: *paraṅ* – *kuṉṟam*, Māyōṉ: Ceyyōṉ 'the black: the red one', or *nīla mēṉi*: *nīla kaṇṭa-* 'the one with the black body: the one with the black throat', may be indications of such tendencies. In the Early Āḻvārs, titles which were original to Murukaṉ are used for Māyōṉ,[391] who with the subsequent Āḻvārs is clearly a 'close god of love and beauty'. But as I have said above, this line of argument cuts across the more historical approach used in the previous pages and is only of the nature of a flight of fancy.

The picture which has resulted from the previous discussions may be summarized in the following Table IX[392] on p. 238.

[391] See below 4.313.1 with notes 14f.

[392] The following abbreviations are used here:

Nos. **1-8**: fragments discussed in 3.3 and Appendices V and VI.

k :	*kuṟiñci*	=	parallel
p :	*pālai*	⌣	link
m :	*mullai*	→	influence
P :	Pāṇṭiya		

*Naturally all dates are very tentative.

TABLE IX

royal court	*akattiṇai*	folk Kṛṣṇaism	temple	Āḻvārs	AD
					100
	Nar. k (No. 7)				150
	Akan. p (No. **8**)	*Mat*. (No. **1**)			200
	P: Neṭuñceliyan II				
			Perump. (No. **3**)		250
Perump. (Nos. **2.4**)	(*Neṭ*)				300
Pura. P (Nos. **5.6**)					350
					400
	Tolk. III				450
	→ *Mul*.		*Cila*. 18. 1 ff		500
	m →	*Cila*. 17			
P					
P				*Pari*.	
	m →	*Kali*.		Early Āḻvārs	550
P					
P	(*Kārnārpatu*)	*Kali*. 123, 4 (*Maṇimēkalai*)			600
	Akan. 59 p			Nammāḻvār	650
					700
		Āycci. 12] 13] 14]		Tirumaṅkai	750
P					
				Āṇṭāḷ	800

PART FOUR

MĀYŌṈ MYSTICISM: THE ĀḶVĀRS

4.1 General introduction: the sources and their native interpretation

4.11 When after the Tamil renaissance, perhaps in the eighth or ninth century,[1] the then extant *caṅkam* poetry was finally collected and arranged in the form of 'anthologies' (*tokai*), the compilers were guided by formal principles, *inter alia* metrical types, average length of poem, and above all the framework of '*caṅkam* style' (as formulated in the *Tolk.*). Whether or not they were aware of other types of poetry in existence at the time, they could include in their *corpus* only material that conformed to the formal requirements. In fact, by that time other types of poetry *were* current which by their very nature had to remain outside a '*caṅkam*' collection; these were, above all, the earlier works, of a pronounced sectarian character, of the Śaivite and Kṛṣṇaite bhakti poets who are commonly known as the Nāyaṉārs and Āḻvārs. As we have seen in the previous pages, Kṛṣṇaism had been in existence in the South from a much earlier period, and in that sense the Āḻvārs represent nothing but another component, and a further development, of Tamil Kṛṣṇa religion. On the other hand, it is a component that enters into Tamil society from the outside, from the northernmost margin of what appears in the *caṅkam* corpus as Tamiḻ-nāṭu, that is from Kāñcī and Vēṅkaṭam (today in southern Andhra). What could be called the 'Āḻvār movement' is then the progressive integration and fusion of the southern 'caṅkam' culture (particularly of the Tamil renaissance) with this new form of sectarian Kṛṣṇaism from the northern fringe of Tamiḻ-nāṭu. Even the latter is an integrally Tamil phenomenon, but without documentation in the *caṅkam corpus* which, as we have seen, centres geographically

[1] On the textual history of *caṅkam* poetry in general, and the date of its compilation, see Zvelebil, 1973, pp. 25f; the individual anthologies were compiled in the eighth or even ninth century AD, and the two super-anthologies as late as the thirteenth century AD.

on Maturai and formally on the poetic structure of the *caṅkam*. This movement is characterized by its pronounced sectarian nature and by a highly emotional form of bhakti (from Nammāḻvār onwards), which integrates many of the religious and poetic features that have been analysed above for the earlier Tamil culture. About ninety-five temples provide the external structure for this bhakti, and one could in fact define the 'movement' as the totality of Kṛṣṇaite bhakti culture associated with the ninety-five temples, from about the sixth to about the tenth century; its prominent representatives were the twelve Āḻvārs.

4.12 The only direct source we have for this movement and for the Āḻvārs is a *corpus* of their own works. We have no reason to believe that this *corpus* is more than a selective and — partially — arbitrary collection, or that only twelve poets were representatives of this bhakti culture. It was in the tenth century that Nāthamuni collected the available material in the '*Corpus* of the Four Thousand [Stanzas]', the *Nālāyirativiyappirapantam*, as Śrīvaiṣṇava hagiography tells us. The twelve poets represented in the compilation became known as the 'sages' (Āḻvār). The *Prabandham* (as it is commonly called) has come down to us through a continuous and faithful Śrīvaiṣṇava tradition.[2] But it is this monolithic character of the *Corpus* itself which will require considerable examination

[2] Since the figure 4000 (as the title of the *corpus*) is quite precise, there has been little scope for later interpolations. Moreover, not only were the songs learned by heart, but along with them also the *aṭi-varavu*, the sequence of words at the beginning of each line of verse. From the twelth century onwards a vast commentarial literature evolved, which definitely fixed the text by recording the occasional variants current at the time, and by settling all the ambiguities and problems the complicated *sandhi* of Tamil can give rise to. Many of the works themselves have built-in features assuring a correct transmission, particularly the *antâdi*. Thus peculiarities which an unchecked oral tradition might have levelled out are retained. For example, in Nammāḻvār we find features typical of Malayalam but uncommon in Tamil: TVM X, 2, 6 *kiṉṟu* for *kiṉṟāṉ*; PTAnt 23 *iḷaiyāppāy*, *nalkāppāṉ*; 60 *nillāppāy*; 83 *ayarāppāy* (which are a kind of negative future, used in the meaning '. . . may not'). Of Skt. *tulasī*, we find besides the normal *tuḻāy* less common forms like *tuḷapa* (Aāp 7; PTM VIII, 1, 4), *tuḷavam* (TMāl 45; PTM III, 6, 3), *tuḷavu* (PTM XI, 1, 9). The TPā shows a number of dialectical peculiarities: 6 *meḷḷa* for *mella*, 20 *kappam* for *kampam*, 23 *muḻañcu* (in some editions) for *muḻaiñcu*, 29 *cirrañciṟu* for *cinnañciṟu*. These may serve as some examples of the meticulous care taken in transmitting the texts. For comparison, verses in Civavākkiyar's *Pāṭal* may be consulted which, for all we know originally identical with certain stanzes in the TCV, illustrate the problems of an unchecked oral transmission.

in order to differentiate the material it contains according to chronological, geographical and sociological coordinates, which in turn have a direct bearing on the interpretation of Kṛṣṇa bhakti. The material is very extensive, even when we restrict our attention to the area of emotional bhakti, and thus the analysis on the following pages is far from exhaustive.

4.13 When in the tenth century Nāthamuni collected the songs of the Āḻvārs, presumably from different local and oral traditions, a new period in the history of Southern Vaiṣṇavism had already begun. The mystical poets had been replaced by the philosophers and scholastics — the *Ācāryas* — whose main inspiration derived from Sanskritic philosophy and ideology, the Vedānta tradition, represented in particular by the *Bhagavadgītā*, and the *Viṣṇu-Purāṇa* (as also the *Pāñcarātra*).[3] It was more for external reasons, particularly in order to create a *paramparā* (an uninterrupted sequence of *gurus* back to primordial times) that the 'Śrīvaiṣṇavism' or 'Viśiṣṭādvaita' of the *Ācāryas* considered itself to be the direct descendant of the Āḻvār movement. Nevertheless, this 'official' link had its feedback on Śrīvaiṣṇavism, even if it hardly influenced its bhakti. Thus we have for instance the *taṉiyaṉ* stanzas, 'self-contained' poems in praise of individual Āḻvārs and their works, in which we can see the beginnings of a hagiographical tradition. The first major work dealing with the 'lives' of the Āḻvārs is a *mahākāvya*, the *Divyasūricaritam* by Garuḍavāhana (12th century). The characteristics of this literary form ensured that poetic fancy and imagination obliterated whatever historical information about the Āḻvārs may still have been in existence at the time. Later works which deal with the 'life-stories' of the Āḻvārs, like the Teṉkaḷai (6000-)*Guruparamparāprabhāvam*, the *Periyatirumuṭiyaṭaivu*, the Vaṭakaḷai (12,000, 3000-)*Guruparamparāprabhāvam*, the very late Teṉkaḷai *Prapannâmṛta* (17th century), and small didactic poems like Vēṅkaṭanātha's *Prabandhasāram* or Maṇavāḷa Māmuṉi's *Upadeśaratnamālai*, are not only based — consecutively — on each other but ultimately seem to derive their information from the *Divyasūricaritam*. In other words, it would be quite mistaken to accept any hagiographical information in these works as *prima*

[3] Therefore I cannot agree with Zvelebil (1973, p. 5) who says: '. . . there is more than ample external evidence to show that the traditions and the emotional and intellectual background of Śrī Rāmānuja were identical with the environments which produced the great Tamil Vaiṣṇava Āḻvārs.'

facie evidence.[4] When these works are studied critically, they can tell us how the Āḻvārs were regarded and interpreted by the Vaiṣṇavas in the centuries after Rāmānuja and can yield interesting information about Śrīvaiṣṇava history; but that is very different from providing a historical account of the lives of the Āḻvārs.

Besides a hagiographical tradition, the Śrīvaiṣṇavas expressed their interest in the Āḻvārs through a number of commentaries on their songs. This tradition began during the lifetime of Rāmānuja with the *Ārāyirappaṭi*[5] and has continued up to the present day.[6] For Nammāḻvār's *Tiruvāymoḻi*, the most important work in the *Prabandham*, the five oldest commentaries alone add up to the size of the *Mahābhārata*.[7] In theory this should mean that the interpretation of these poems does not present problems, but in practice this is not entirely the case. The bulk of commentarial material is enormous, and thus by itself creates considerable difficulty; moreover, there is a clear tendency here to 'dilute' the original meanings of words (e.g., a great number of attributes are simply rendered by 'beautiful' although their literal meaning is much more specific). Most of the commentators are no longer familiar with the conventions of *caṅkam* poetry, a deficiency which has given rise to a great many pseudo-problems and which ultimately is responsible for the abstruse allegorical interpretation which became fashionable from the thirteenth century onward.[8] Moreover, the

[4] Thus what Bhandarkar, 1913, Farquhar, 1920, Hooper, 1929, Esnoul, 1964, Filliozat, 1972 (even Zvelebil, 1974, 1975), etc., have to say about the Āḻvārs derives from these legends. A fatal confusion arises when these legends are uncritically used with other historical evidence. I have analysed the history of the hagiography of Nammāḻvār in section 2.00 (compare also section 3.00) of Hardy, 1978.

[5] *Paṭi* is the Tamil equivalent of *grantha*, 'prose-unit of 32 syllables' which thus corresponds to the *śloka* in length. This manner of counting presumably originated in the custom of paying a copyist by the quantity of text copied out. *Āṟ' āyira* is 6,000.

[6] Thus we have P. B. Aṇṇaṅkarācāriyar's *Divyârthadīpikai* and for the Vaṭakaḷai U. Vīrarāghavâcāriyar's *Prabandharakṣai* (still incomplete)—both voluminous works.

[7] Precisely: 6,000, 9,000, 24,000, 36,000 (better known as the *Īṭu*), and 12,000 which makes 87,000 *granthas*. Adding the *Arumpatavurai* on the *Īṭu*, the figure increases by perhaps another 50,000. There are many more commentaries, some of them very lengthy, on the other works in the *Prabandham*.

[8] Hooper, in his interpretation of the TVir, simply reproduces the limitations and distortions of these traditional commentators: unawareness of the *caṅkam* background and absurd allegorical interpretations. See 1929, pp. 58–88, and notes 91 and 103 with 4.24 below.

commentaries are written on the doctrinal premises of Viśiṣṭâdvaita, which makes them impose on the poems conceptual categories alien to their original spirit. Thus here again a critical evaluation of Āḻvār poetry has to take the limitations of the commentaries into account in order to avoid misjudgements and distortions. On the other hand, these commentaries are extremely valuable and interesting documents in their own right; a comprehensive history of Śrīvaiṣṇavism could be written by utilizing these neatly laid out layers of the historical development of this religious tradition.[9] Moreover, it is entirely due to this commentarial tradition that it has been possible to present here such an extensive range of material from the *Prabandham*.[10]

A third area in which the influence of the Āḻvārs can be detected is the sophisticated *stotra*-literature, which begins already with Yāmuna and reaches its greatest heights with Veṅkaṭanātha.

4.14 It is only to be expected that in a large *corpus* like the *Prabandham* we should find much poetry that is no better than mediocre. Yet some of the poems found here belong to the best that were written in India in connection with Kṛṣṇa bhakti. In my opinion, the *Bhāgavata-Purāṇa*, in spite of its lyricism and artistry, remains an academic and hybrid work when compared with some of the sophisticated and yet strikingly intense and passionately emotional songs of Nammāḻvār or Āṇṭāḷ. But the factor that allowed for this excellence is at the same time the reason why the poetry fell into oblivion: it reached its height of perfection because it was rooted so deeply in the Tamil[11] cultural tradition; but in the overall Indian

[9] This will not be an easy undertaking. I myself have translated most of the available commentaries on *one* song by Nammāḻvār (TVM I, 4), which translation runs to almost two hundred pages. I hope to publish this material in some form, to give an idea of this important branch of Śrīvaiṣṇava literature. Compare 4.242.1 with notes.

[10] Only someone who has tried to translate the *Prabandham* (or for that matter any old Tamil poetry) without the help of commentaries will be able to appreciate the assistance provided by them. Naturally, the translations given here are very tentative.

[11] The language of the Āḻvārs has been styled 'Middle Tamil'; it differs considerably from the Old Tamil to which the sources discussed in Part 3 belong. The differences are mainly stylistic, but also morphological features account for them. But the *Prabandham* itself is not written in a uniform language. We could very provisionally distinguish four forms of the language: a type that approaches 'standard'

context, Tamil literature had no position or function since it lay outside general Indian awareness. This meant that only when 'translated' into Sanskrit and Sanskritic culture could Āḻvār poetry and Āḻvār bhakti become influential in the North.

One such translation has been mentioned already: the Śrīvaiṣṇava tradition. But while even this form of Sanskritization seems to have had little impact on other areas in India, at least with reference to Kṛṣṇa bhakti, a second Sanskritic adaptation is represented by the *Bhāgavata-Purāṇa* — a highly influential work which will be analysed in 5.00.

4.15 *Arrangement.*

In spite of the restricted scope of our present study, the vast amount of material which the *Prabandham* contains and, above all, the fact that here for the first time a systematic study of it is attempted, make it necessary for us to deal with the Āḻvārs in detail. It is unavoidable that matters are investigated which are not directly related to emotional bhakti. But any conclusions we might draw without having established a reasonable frame of reference would be meaningless. Thus chapter 4.2 will deal with such general aspects of the *Prabandham* as its works, their authors, geography, chronology, and peculiarities of the poetic style of the Āḻvārs. The following chapter 4.3 contains the discussion of the material which is relevant for our study of emotionalism. But since the Āḻvārs show a considerable variety of attitudes, a separate analysis of each work appears to be most useful. The arrangement here corresponds to the chronology which I suggest in 4.23. Nammāḻvār, Parakālaṉ, Periyâḻvār, and Āṇṭāḷ are the important representatives of emotional Kṛṣṇa bhakti. Chapter 4.4 follows up the individual analyses by presenting a systematic overall picture of Āḻvār bhakti, and by investigating its social environment and historical position.

Tamil, and three idiosyncratic types represented by the Early Āḻvārs, Nammāḻvār, and Periyâḻvār/Āṇṭāḷ respectively. The differences between these types are regional, social, and stylistic. I wonder whether a highly literate *veṇpā* of the *Antâtis* and a colloquial, popular song by Periyâḻvār were both comprehensible to one and the same ordinary Tamil speaker.

4.2 The Āḻvārs and their works in general

4.21 *Corpus, works and authorship*

The *Nālāyirativiyappirapantam*[1] (short: *Prabandham*) (see Table X) derives its name from the number of stanzas it contains.[2] It is divided into four books of slightly different sizes and with fairly arbitrary titles: *mutal-āyiram* 'the first thousand', *periya-tirumoḻi* (from the major work this book includes), *iyarpā* 'short metres', and *tiru-vāymoḻi* (from the single work this book consists of). Between them these four books contain twenty-three works; the rationale behind their arrangement and distribution among the four parts is not altogether clear, but certain principles can be recognized. The basic division into four books would be suggested by the figure 4,000 and the fact that the two large works, the PTM and the TVM, consist of just over 1,000 stanzas each; then we must not forget the hallowed figure 4 of the *Vedas*. As each PTM and TVM constitutes one quarter, the remaining material had to be divided into halves; the title *iyarpā* indicates the principle according to which this was done: short and long metres were kept separate. Finally, the sequence of the four books seems to be determined by functional considerations. Books I and II contain the material which (a) is of a popular nature, and (b) links with daily or frequent ceremonies. Book III consists of literary and abstract pieces, while Book IV would be sung only once a year (as hagiography tells us); it is the most speculative work in the collection. Moreover, didactic considerations enter as well, since it has been customary to teach children the *Prabandham* over a period of years, and it

[1] Tamil *nāl* 'four', *āyiram* 'thousand'; *tiviya*-Skt. *divya*, 'holy', and *pirapantam* -Skt. *prabandha* lit. 'composition, literary work', then 'collection, compilation'.

[2] Unlike the *grantha* unit used to specify the size of some of the commentaries or hagiographical works (see 4.1 with notes 5 and 7), or for that matter also of the *Prajñāpāramitā-sūtras*, the unit here is the poetic stanza (which may contain as many as 112 syllables). When the poem is not divided into stanzas, a variety of measuring units is employed (see below). The Śaivite *corpus*, the *Tirumuṟai*, contains about 19,000 stanzas (taking two lines of *akaval* to form one stanza) by twenty-seven different authors and in twelve books. Thus this material is about five times as large as the *Prabandham*. But it must not be forgotten that this collection was concluded at least two hundred years later than that of *Āḻvār* poetry. (For the count of stanzas I have used Zvelebil's (1973, pp. 188–9) table, adding figures where necessary.)

would be only natural to begin with the easier material, and then proceed up to the work which is both conceptually and linguistically the most difficult, the TVM. In fact, the TVM along with its commentaries formed the advanced subject of theological studies in Vaiṣṇava circles, known as the *Bhagavadviṣayam*. Naturally, all these are only hypothetical attempts to trace the rationale of the arrangement; but it is clear that a compiler has been involved in the structuring of the *Prabandham*;[3] he is said to have been the first of the *Ācāryas*, Nāthamuni. Hagiography tells us that he not only rediscovered the TVM and compiled the *Prabandham*, but also composed the tunes for the poems and established a musical tradition. It is certainly clear that most of the works in this collection (except for Book III, where it is doubtful) were created as songs, possibly even dance-songs. This is borne out by the poetic structure,[4] and by frequent references in the poems themselves.[5] The information given by the hagiographical works may best be interpreted as referring to Nāthamuni's setting the songs to a *different* type of music.[6] However, this musical tradition died out centuries ago, and it is only from Śaivite *ōtuvārs* (professional temple singers) who have preserved an ancient style of singing that one can get a vague idea of how the Vaiṣṇava hymns may have sounded at some time.[7]

[3] Not only the perfect figure 4,000 (see Table X), or the functional arrangement points to that fact, but also details like the fact that the very first poem (PâḷTM I, 1, *Tiruppallāṇṭu*) figures as a *maṅgalaśāsana* or *nāndī* introduction to the whole *corpus*.

[4] This will be discussed below, 4.24.

[5] One of the characteristics of Āḻvār bhakti, frequently mentioned in 4.3, is the dancing and singing. The *śrutiphala* stanzas constantly speak of the singing and the music of the poems they are attached to. TVM I, 5, 11: '*bhaktas* who sing in Tamil' (*tamiḻar icaikkārar pattar*), II, 3, 11: 'singing (these stanzas)' (*pāṭi*); NTM III, 10: 'this poem recited with sweet music' (*inn icaiyār conna mālai*), IV, 11: 'song' (*pāṭal*); PāḷTM VI, 10: 'spoken with love, with sweet music' (*inn icaiyil mēvi colliya*); PâḷTM I, 9, 11: 'those who will sing (this poem)' (*pāṭuvar*), etc.

[6] This may have been necessary, because the original melodies had been forgotten; but the legends suggest another reason, viz. that for the sake of stressing the sanctity of the poems, the original 'secular folk tunes' were replaced by melodies in *Vedic* style. For details see p. 4/5

[7] Since large endowments were necessary to maintain professional musicians at a temple, a tradition would die out through lack of such income. Some contemporary singers (e.g., Maturai N. Krishnan) included a very few poems from the *Prabandham* in their recital, but the *rāgams* do not even agree with those mentioned in the printed editions of the *Prabandham*, which themselves are probably of late (seventeenth century?) origin.

TABLE X The *Nālāyirativiyappirapantam*

Book I	*Mutalāyiram* The First Thousand			
	(1) Periyâḻvār: *Periyâḻvār-Tirumoḻi*		473	PâḶTM
	(2) Aṇṭāḷ: *Tiruppāvai*		30	TPā
	(3) ,, : *Nācciyār-Tirumoḻi*		143	NTM
	(4) Kulacēkaraṉ: *Perumāḷ-Tirumoḻi*		105	PāḷTM
	(5) [(Tirumaḻicai)]: *Tiruccantaviruttam*		120	TCV
	(6) Toṇṭaraṭippoṭi: *Tirumālai*		45	TMāl
	(7) ,, : *Tiruppaḷḷiyeḻucci*		10	TPaḷ
	(8) (Tiruppāṇ): 'Amalaṉ āti ppirāṉ'		10	Aāp
	(9) Madhurakavi: 'Kaṇṇi nuṇ ciṟu ttāmpu'		11	Knct
			947	
Book II	*Periyatirumoḻi*			
	(10) Tirumaṅkai Āḻvār: *Periyatirumoḻi*		1,084	PTM
	(11) ,, : *Tirukkuṟuntāṇṭakam*		20	
	(12) ,, : *Tiruneṭuntāṇṭakam*		30	
		2,081	1,134	
Book III	*Iyaṟpā* Short Metres			
	(13) (Poykai): *First Tiruvantāti*		100	1st Ant
	(14) (Pūtatt'): *Second Tiruvantāti*		100	2nd Ant
	(15) (Pēy): *Third Tiruvantāti*		100	3rd Ant
	(16) (Tirumaḻicai): *'Nāṉmukaṉ' Tiruvantāti*		96	4th Ant
	(17) Nammāḻvār: *Tiruviruttam*		100	TVir
	(18) (,,): *Tiruvāciriyam* (71 lines)		7	Tāc
	(19) (,,): *Periyatiruvantāti*		87	PTAnt
	(20) (Tirumaṅkai): *Tiruveḻukūṟṟirukkai* (46 lines)		1	
	(21) (,,): *Ciṟiyatirumaṭal* (155 lines)	40	$77^1/_2$	CTMaṭ
	(22) (,,): *Periyatirumaṭal* (297 lines)	78	$148^1/_2$	PTMaṭ
		709	817	
		(2,790)	2,898	
Book IV	(23) Nammāḻvār: *Tiruvāymoḻi*		1,102	TVM
		(3,892)	4,000	
Appendix:	Raṅgatt' amutaṉ Āḻvāṉ: *iRāmānuja-nūṟṟantāti* (12th or 13th century AD)		108	
		(4,000)	4,108	

( ) only traditional ascription
[ ] ascription doubtful

Table X shows the different works contained in the *Prabandham*, their respective lengths, and authorship. I have used the names of the Āḻvārs most commonly found in Śrīvaiṣṇava circles, and not the Skt. renderings or the proper names by which some of them 'sign' their poems. Since not all works are 'signed', in certain cases the author ascription rests entirely on the hagiographic tradition. For Nos. 21 and 22 we find two methods of counting the stanza-units; the original manner considers two lines as one stanza, and we obtain the figure 4000 directly. The more artificial counting method[8] must have been adopted in the twelfth or thirteenth century, when the *iRāmānujanūṟṟantâti* was added to the *Prabandham*.[9]

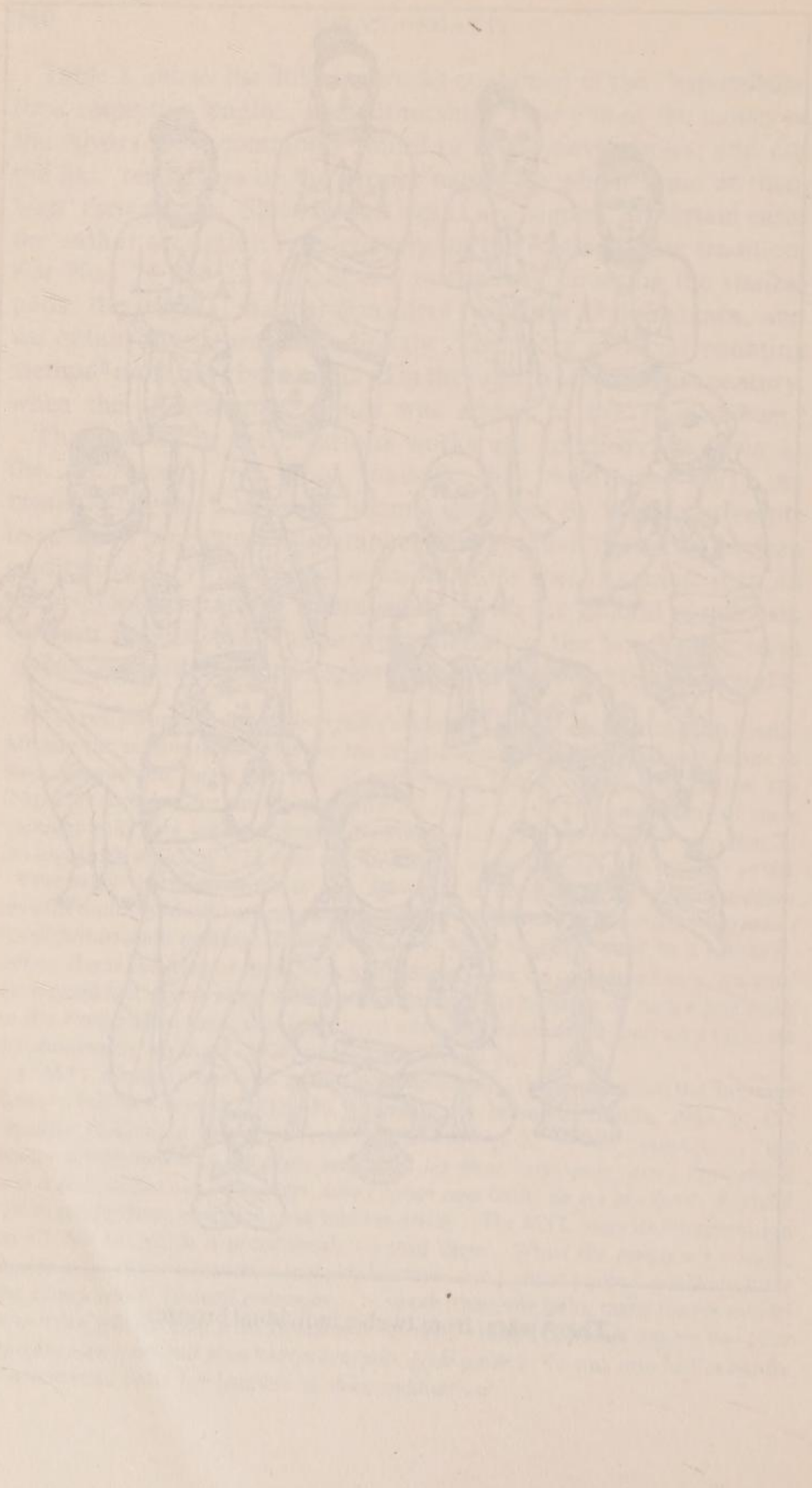
The authors of these various works are collectively known as the *Āḻvār(-kaḷ)*; this is an honorific title (~*Nāyaṉār(-kaḷ)*), the meaning of which however became obscured by various attempts to render it pregnantly or metaphorically: 'who is immersed in deep meditation'[10]. A number of considerations speaks against such an artificial interpretation. In accordance with the general parallelism between Śaivite and Vaiṣṇavite material in the South, the term 'nāyaṉār' ('lord, master') suggests an equally concrete and straight-

[8] The two poems are divided into fairly arbitrary 'thought-units' of unequal length. Already the person responsible for the original count (2 lines = 1 stanza) seems to have ignored the *antâti* structure of both poems (which, recognized for the Tāc (No. 18), accounts for the division into 7 stanzas of the 71 lines). Some of these 'thought-units' are actually defined by such *antâtis*, e.g., PTMaṭ 20 *maraikaḷ*/21 *ammaṟai*; 22 *nāṅk' aṉṟē*/23 *nāṅkiṉil*; but many more *caesurae* are without *antâti*.

[9] Probably the latest work in the *Tirumuṟai* is Book XII, the *Periyapurāṇam* (twelfth century) which narrates the lives of the Nāyaṉārs. The *iRāmānucanūṟṟantâti* (twelfth/thirteenth century; Zvelebil, 1974, p. 195, 'AD 1017' must be a mistake), telling about the lives of the Āḻvārs and Ācāryas, can be considered as a 'nucleus' *Periyapurāṇam*. Some early writers assumed from the presence of such a late work in the *Prabandham* that the Āḻvārs lived *after* Rāmānuja (who died AD 1137); see Krishnaswami Aiyangar, 1920, pp. 4f on Caldwell etc.

[10] MTL *sub* āḻvār 'one who is deep in meditation on the attributes of the Supreme Being'; this is adopted DED 338. Compare for example, Gonda, 1963, p. 127 '*in tiefer Meditation Versunkene*' or, Esnoul, 1964, p. 32 '. . . *les "saints"*, . . . "*qui plonge profondément*". *Les āḻvār sont donc les êtres assez purs, assez étroitement unis à la divinité pour s'immerger dans l'océan sans limite de ses attributs*'. Zvelebil (1974, p. 91) 'those who have sunk into the divine'. The MTL bases its interpretation on 4th Ant 14, which is nonsensical; we read there: 'When the *camayar* [= Jains, Buddhists,—the commentator includes Śaivites—etc.], those corpses unable to utter the names which Tirumāl possesses . . . , speak [their vile talk], many [feeble minds] who listen will develop a liking and *sink to ruin* [= hell].' (*Tirumāl taṉ pēr āṉa pēca ppeṟāta piṇa ccamayar pēca kkēṭṭu ācai paṭṭ' āḻvār palar*.) 'To sink into hell' is hardly the semantic basis for 'sunken in deep meditation'.

The Āḻvārs, from twelve individual bronzes



forward sense for 'āḻvār'. *De facto* these poets can hardly be described as 'immersed in deep meditation' because their bhakti opposes precisely this religious attitude which implies a 'withdrawal of the senses'. While the eleven male authors are all called (x-) *āḻvār*, the one poetess is called *āṇṭāḷ* 'the lady' (lit.: 'she who rules'). The Skt. rendering is *sūri*[11] 'learned man, sage' (particularly as title of a Jain teacher).[12] Finally, etymology too appears to suggest a different interpretation.[13] Originally, we probably had *āḻvār* ~ *sūri* in Jain and Buddhist names,[14] meaning 'sage, saint'. From here, the title acquired a more general meaning outside Jain or Buddhist contexts, like 'noble person, lord, master'[15] (to which *āṇṭāḷ* is a fairly precise semantic parallel in the feminine), until it became used simply as a morpheme expressing 'polite speech', added, e.g., to 'Viṣṇu's discus' or the tree under which Nammāḻvār meditated.[16] 'Saintly lord' seems therefore the most appropriate translation, derived from contemporary parlance.

Hagiographic tradition refers to the individual poets in a variety of ways. Simply descriptive–honorific are the names: Nammāḻvār 'our saint', Periya-āḻvār 'the great saint', Āṇṭāḷ 'the lady'. The alleged home-town occurs in: Tirumaṅkai and Tirumaḻicai-āḻvār 'the saint from (the town) Tirumaṅkai' and '. . . Tirumaḻicai'. In three cases, 'signature names' are retained: Kulaśekhara-āḻvār, Madhurakavi-āḻvar, Toṇṭaraṭippoṭiyāḻvār. In one case, the alleged profession is mentioned: Tiruppāṇ-āḻvār 'the saint who was a bard'. Two names seem to have rather obscure roots in Hindu mythology: Pēy- and Pūtatt'-āḻvār; the first could either be 'the mad/possessed saint'[17] or 'the saint who was (like) a demon',[18]

[11] For example, in the Divya-*sūri*-caritam or in the *Prapannāmṛta*.

[12] Thus MW. We also find *sūri*[2] 'lord, master', but only in the ṚgV.

[13] One can separate either *āḻvu* 'depth' + *āṟ* = *kuṟippuviṉai*, or *āḻ*– 'to sink, be absorbed' + *v* (future/present) + *āṟ* (3rd pl.). Literally this would be 'who possesses profundity' or 'who is/will be absorbed'.

[14] The MTL mentions names like Avirodhi–āḻvār, Maitrī-āḻvār. It is a different question, how *āḻvāṉ/r* developed semantically ~ *sūri* (had Skt. *sūrya/sūri* 'sun' anything to do with *āḻvāṉ/r* 'sun'?); what is important here is only the *fact that sūrī* ~ *āḻvār*.

[15] *South Indian Inscriptions*, III, p. 150 (quoted MTL): *āḻvār Tiruvaraṅka-tēvar* 'lord, god of Śrīraṅgam'.

[16] For example, (3000) *Guruparamparāprabhāvam* (p. 18): *tiru ppuḷiy āḻvār aṭiyilē* 'at the foot of the *noble* tamarind tree'.

[17] DED 3635 yields a root **pē* 'to be mad, possessed . . .', which is not recognized by the MTL (see following note). See PāḷTM III, 8 *pēyarē* 'crazy, mad'.

and the second probably is 'the demon saint'.[19] Even more obscure is the last name Poykai-āḻvār, which in accordance with tradition would have to be rendered 'the saint from the pond/tank',[20] but which (more likely?) could also be 'the owl saint'.[21]

In some cases we still know the real names of the poets, which they mention in the *śrutiphala* stanzas. Thus Periyâḻvār signs himself as Viṭṭucittaṉ,[22] and Āṇṭaḷ as Kōtai[23] (viz. Flower-garland) of[24] Viṭṭucittaṉ; Kulacēkaraṉ, Toṇṭaraṭippoṭi (viz. Dust of the Feet of *Bhaktas*),[25] and Maturakavi have been mentioned above. Tirumaṅkai-Āḻvār refers to himself variously as Kaliyaṉ 'Warrior',

[18] In this case, *pēy* would < Prakrit *pēẏa* < Skt. *preta* 'spirit of a dead person, demon'; this is the sole etymology suggested by the MTL. Kāraikkāl Ammaiyār signs herself as *pēy makaḷ* 'demoness'. While the association of 'pretas' with Śiva is natural, for a Vaiṣṇava Āḻvār it would be rather strange. Compare Filliozat in Karavelane, 1956, p. xiii. Prof. Burrow considers the etymology *pēy* < Skt. *preta* difficult.

[19] The more obvious derivation would be from Skt. *bhūta* 'goblin' (compare *Paṭ.* 57), *if pēy* is really < *preta*. On the other hand, we find in the MTL *pūtam*[2] (< Skt. *pū-* 'to purify') 'purity, truth, darbha grass, conch', and any of these meanings would be appropriate for an Āḻvār's name. Skt. *bhūta* 'element' or 'being' seems less likely. However, in TVM V, 2 we find *pūtam* used in the sense of '(Viṣṇu's) subject'; is this the etymology of the name?

[20] The Skt. name of the saint is Saro-yogī 'the *yogī* of the lake'; legend tells that he was born from a lotus in a lake. Already a *caṅkam* poet is called Poykai(yār), but there seems to be little evidence that he is identical with the Āḻvār (not only as Krishnaswami Aiyangar, 1920, pp. 67–75 holds, but also as medieval commentators presume, see Krishnaswami, loc. cit.).

[21] *Poykai*[2] in the MTL. That 'owl' is not altogether impossible in a proper name is shown by Skt. *Ulūka*, which is both a name of Indra and the legendary founder of the Vaiśeṣika system.

[22] Some editions print *Viṭṇu-*; in this case *ṭ* is nothing but an orthographic substitute for *ṣ* (which does not exist in the ordinary Tamil alphabet). But the *ṭṭ* might represent an actual colloquial pronunciation /ṭ:/. However, Viṣṇu + *citta* 'whose mind is fixed on Viṣṇu' is likely to be the etymology of the name itself.

[23] I do not think that the later Skt. rendering of her name, viz. Godā (e.g., first *taṉiyaṉ* on the TPā or Veṅkaṭanātha's *Godā*-stuti) is the etymon of Kōtai. It seems to be an *ad hoc* etymology, which then in turn may well have given rise to the conception that Āṇṭāḷ (=Godā) is the *avatāra* of Bhūmi (Skt. *godā* 'earth'). See below, 6.22 with note 30.

[24] The genitive is implied in *taṉ*, *taṅkaḷ*, and the easiest way of explaining it would be to consider Kōtai the daughter of Viṭṭucittaṉ. Hagiography however makes her a foundling, brought up by Periyâḻvār.

[25] In PāḷTM II, 2 we find 'dancing in the dušt of the feet of the *bhaktas*' (*toṇṭar aṭi ppoṭi āṭa*) in a general context, viz. as an act of bhakti.

or Parakālaṉ 'who is death to his enemies', often with the attribute Kali-kaṉṟi 'one who puts down with a strong hand the *Kali-yuga*'. Finally, Nammāḻvār signs most frequently as Caṭakōpaṉ,[26] but also as Māṟaṉ[27] or Kāri Māṟaṉ.[28]

Along with their proper names, these poets mention certain attributes which allow us to place them in their geographical and social environment. Thus Periyâḻvār mentions as his town 'Southern Villiputūr' or 'Putuvai', and so does Āṇṭāḷ; Kalikaṉṟi constantly refers to the towns Maṅkai and Āli, and Caṭakōpaṉ to 'Southern Kurukūr' (once: Kurukai).[29] 'Southern' here is synonymous with 'Pāṇṭiyan'.[30] More complicated is Kulacēkaraṉ, who refers to Kūṭal, Koḷḷi, Kōḻi, and Koṅku.[31] Moreover, these Āḻvārs specify their status in those towns, though the terms used are somewhat ambiguous for us. For Periyâḻvār we have as the most specific term *nakar nampi*, which in later Vaiṣṇava parlance means 'temple brahmin'.[32] Other terms are *kōṉ* lit. 'head: leader', *pirāṉ* 'great

[26] The Skt. texts render 'kōpaṉ' by 'ari, vairī, . . .', in other words, as 'inimical, hostile' < Skt. *kopa*. 'Caṭa' is rendered 'śaṭha', and for the whole name we would get something like 'enemy of the wicked' (thus MW). However, this etymology strikes me as somewhat artificial. In fact, in Vaiṣṇava ritual a *caṭakōpam* is employed (a bell-shaped metal object, with the representation of the god's or saint's feet on top; the priest puts it for a moment on the devotee's head—a formalized expression of 'worshipping with one's head the god's feet') which from its function is clearly <*jaṭā* + *gopa* 'guarding the hair/head'. I wonder whether this could be a better etymology for the Āḻvār's name. Prof. Burrow, in a personal communication, suggested to render the name *śaṭha* 'naughty' and *gopa* 'cowherd', viz. as a—rather fanciful and unique—paraphrase of Kṛṣṇa's name. Śrīvaiṣṇava tradition derives it sometimes from *śaṭha* 'evil humour of the body that destroys the innate wisdom of the soul at birth' (see Hardy, 1978, note 25).

[27] Occurs already in *Puṟa*. 55 in the name of a Pāṇṭiya king; perhaps *māṟu* 'enmity', 'death' (compare Kālaṉ<*kāla*, 'who is death to [his enemies]', parallel to *kōpaṉ* (= *ari*, *vairī*).

[28] Kāri as the name of a generous patron occurs *Ciṟup*. 95; possibly < *kār* 'blackness'. While one could speak of a parallelism *māṟaṉ*/*kōpaṉ*, such a parallel for *kāri* and *śaṭha* does not seem possible. Thus when we read in TVM IV, 5, 11: Kāri Māṟaṉ Caṭakōpaṉ, the last name cannot be taken to be the Skt. rendering of the first two.

[29] TVM III, 6, 11. Like Putuvai, this is a Sanskritisation, and in Skt. works we find in fact Kurukā and Putuvā.

[30] TVM IV, 3, 11; V, 2, 11, etc., we read 'Teṉṉaṉ Kurukūr', 'Kurukūr of the Pāṇṭiyas'. Compare 3.534 and 3.64 for a similar generic usage of 'Pāṇṭiyan'.

[31] On these four towns, see 4.22, note 67.

[32] So the MTL. The reference is NTM XIII, 10.

one',[33] and *paṭṭaṉ*<Skt. *bhaṭṭa* (commonly for brahmin scholars). Kulacēkaraṉ's status seems indicated through *iṟai*, *kāvalaṉ*, and *nāyakaṉ*, which all point to a 'king' or a 'chieftain'. *Kōṉ* and *kōmāṉ* denote a more general 'head, leader', but other specific attributes would appear to corroborate that he was a chieftain: 'with the (royal) umbrella',[34] 'of vigour', 'with the glittering sword';[35] 'with the murderous sharp lance'.[36] Similarly Parakālaṉ calls himself *vēntaṉ* 'king',[37] *āḷan* 'ruler',[38] *talaivaṉ* 'leader',[39] *Āli nāṭaṉ* 'lord of the country of Āli'.[40] Moreover, we hear of attributes like 'sword',[41] 'battle',[42] 'skilled with the long lance',[43] 'of powerful arms',[44] 'of shoulders resembling mountains',[45] 'with the chariot (driven) by horses'.[46] It should be clear that Parakālaṉ is a (local) king or chieftain. Toṇṭaraṭippoṭi tells us that his office was to provide flower garlands for the temple,[47] which makes him a brahmin. Caṭakōpaṉ's case is more difficult. He calls himself a *nakarāṉ* 'master of the village/temple'[48] and frequently *Vaḻuti vaḻa nāṭaṉ* 'lord of the fertile Pāṇḍyan land'.[49] The latter term is probably technical, because *vaḻa nāṭu* refers to the administrative division above the village level.[50] Thus he may have been a pro-

[33] Said to be<Skt. *bṛhad* (nom. *bṛhān*) 'lord, chief, master'.
[34] PāḷTM I, 11: *kuṭai*.
[35] Ibid., *viṟal*, *oḷ vāḷ*.
[36] IV, 11 (similarly V, 10; VIII, 11; IX, 11) *koṉ naviluṁ kūr vēl*.
[37] PTM I, 3, 10; 4, 10, etc.
[38] PTM I, 7, 10.
[39] PTM I. 8, 10.
[40] PTM VII, 7, 10; 8, 10.
[41] PTM I, 1, 10: *vāḷ*.
[42] II, 5, 10: *pōr*.
[43] II, 6, 10: *neṭu vēl valavaṉ*.
[44] V, 9, 10: *tiṟal tōḷ*.
[45] VI, 8, 10: *kaṉ naviluṉ tōḷ*.
[46] VII, 4, 10: *vāmāṉ rēr*.
[47] TMāl 45; *tuḻava ttoṇṭu āya tol cīr Toṇṭar*[0] 'Toṇṭar. of ancient fame who is [engaged in] the service of the *tulsī*'; *toṇṭu* 'service' (from which we have *toṇṭar* 'servant' = *bhakta*) refers to the activities of professional temple worship, here: to provide the *tulsī* for the *vigraha*.
[48] TVir 100; TVM IV, 10, 11.
[49] TVM II, 8, 11; III, 6, 11; V, 6, 11; IX, 2, 11, etc. Vaḻuti, like Teṉṉaṉ, is generic, thus simply 'Pāṇṭiyan'.
[50] 'Above the *grāma* was the administrative division . . . often called *vaḻa nāṭu* . . . In this division also there was an assembly of elders and a chief executive official

vincial official,[51] possibly of noble descent.[52] Maturakavi seems to point in another direction, but his evidence must be considered to be of secondary importance.[53] Thus for only six of the twelve Āḻvārs have we any indication of their social status:

brahmin: Viṭṭucittaṉ, Toṇṭaraṭippoṭi; Āṇṭāḷ.
chieftains: Kulacēkaraṉ, Parakālaṉ.
provincial landlord or official: Caṭakōpaṉ.

Perhaps we can add Maturakavi to any of these three, on the basis of his having a Sanskrit name.[54] In other words, even if all the remaining Āḻvārs were 'Śūdras', one could hardly consider the 'Āḻvār movement' to be 'low-caste'. Moreover, even these remaining Āḻvārs display a high degree of learning and education, a fact which would provide additional evidence for the assumption that the movement was in some sense 'elitist'. Some of these results will be corroborated through the analysis of the works of these Āḻvārs, but the whole question about the social strata of the Āḻvārs is far from settled.

Unfortunately, no external evidence concerning the Āḻvārs appears to have been discovered so far, apart from one or two red herrings.[55] There is no other literary work which could with any

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known as *nāṭṭu kkōṉ*.' Nilakanta Sastri, 1966, p. 166. Nammāḻvār calls himself *vaḷa-nāṭaṉ* and *kōṉ*, e.g., TVM III, 6, 11. For a further discussion see Hardy, 1978, section 1.3 with notes, and 7.4 with notes.

[51] Concerning the basic administrative division, the *grāma* (~*ūr*, *nakar*), Nilakanta Sastri (1966, p. 165) writes: 'The village assembly regulated irrigation rights, . . . maintained tanks and roads and managed the affairs of temples, either directly or by means of executive officers.' *Nakarāṉ* would then suggest such an executive officer, while *nāṭaṉ* a higher rank. But note that also Parakālaṉ calls himself a *nāṭaṉ*. See also Subrahmanya, 1954–5.

[52] 'Provincial offices were often held by princes of royal family.' Nilakanta Sastri, 1966, p. 166.

[53] He uses exclusively the title *nampi* (1f, 4ff, 9f) or *nakar nampi* (3,11) which we have found with Periyāḻvār in the sense of '(Vaiṣṇava) temple brahmin'. Does he use the word in the sense of 'executive officer of a temple'? But then we have no evidence that Madhurakavi knew the precise status of Caṭakōpaṉ; he might be referring to the *temple image* of his.

[54] One could argue that a Sanskrit name used by a minister (see the following note) would hardly be used by a *śūdra* or outcaste.

[55] One is a Pāṇṭiya inscription of *c.* 770 A.D. It mentions a minister Madhurakavi Kāri, son of Māraṉ. Quite considerable violence has to be employed to turn this into a reference to Madhurakavi Āḻvār, the (remote?) disciple of Māraṉ son of Kāri. Gopinath Rao (1917-8, pp. 18f) who produced this theory was refuted by

degree of certainty be ascribed to any of the Āḻvārs.[56] But considering how little research has been done on medieval South India, our present ignorance may not be irremediable.

4.22 *Geography*

Mention has been made above of a poetic genre, exemplified by a few poems in the *caṅkam corpus*, which I have styled 'temple poetry'. Not only does the religion of the Āḻvārs derive one of its major inspirations from the temple setting; even stylistically this is incessantly expressed by either making reference to individual temples or (more commonly) dedicating a whole song to one of the

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Krishnasvami Aiyangar (1920, pp. 46f). All we can refer from this inscription is that the various names were common at the time.

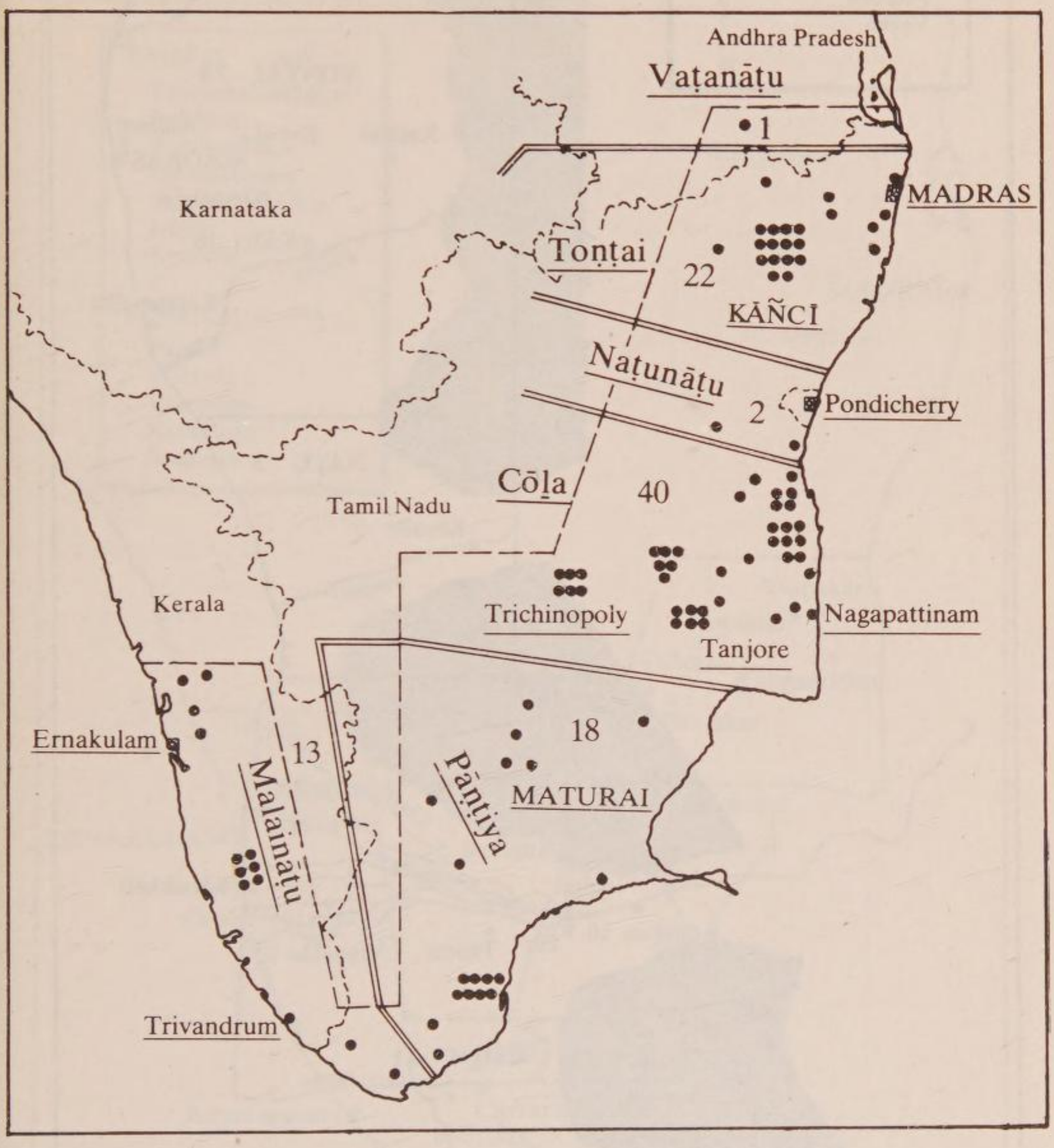
Another such red herring might be Vaiyapuri Pillai's (1956) discussion of Nammāḻvār's dates (pp. 128-32), who according to him 'must have lived later than AD 870'. Ignoring his unwarranted faith in the historical reliability of the *iRāmānuja-nūṟṟantâti* (which also Zvelebil, 1974, p. 195, and 1975, p. 155, note 167, proclaims without giving any reasons), and his even less convincing postulate that the Āḻvār quotes *from* Periyâḻvār, etc., a slightly stronger case could be made out for Nammāḻvār's references to the two temples Varakuṇamaṅkai and Śrīvaramaṅgalam. However, the very early history of the Pāṇṭiyas seems chronologically far from settled (as a critical look at Nilakanta Sastri, 1929 ought to show); derivation of a temple name from a king's title in itself is always problematic, and Vaiyapuri Pillai does not give any references to the sources from which he read the inscriptions he quotes; finally, also he has to 'identify' certain names with otherwise known kings. Personally I find his arguments far from convincing, and for reasons mentioned below would favour an earlier date for the Āḻvār.

[56] (1) For the *caṅkam* poet Poykaiyār who ought to be different from the Āḻvār, see note 20 above.

(2) A king Kulaśekhara signs the *Mukundamālā* (in the *śrutiphala*), a Sanskrit *stotra*. Most authors have simply identified the two kings. Since I plan to deal extensively with the textual and authorship problem of this work elsewhere, I shall not enter here into the very complex situation. But I am convinced on the evidence I have collected that the author of the *stotra* is *different* from the Āḻvār.

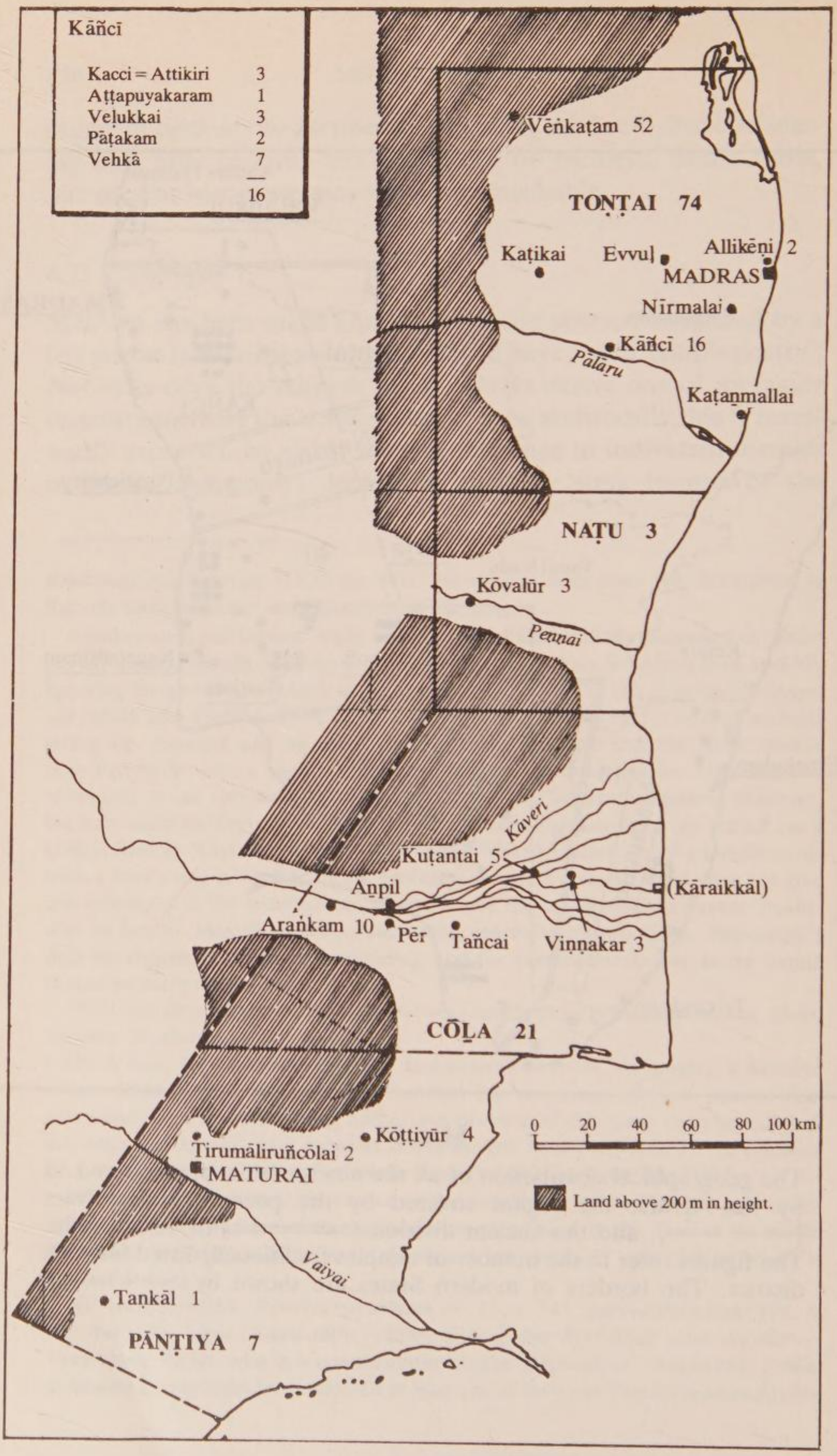
(3) Another very complex question is the authorship of the *Tiruccantaviruttam*, which contains a number of stanzas which are also found in the *Pāṭal* of the *siddha* Civavākkiyar. Again, this issue would require an extensive investigation which is impossible here.

(4) Vedāntadeśika, *Rahasyatrayasāram* ch. 16, p. 545, quotes Periyâḻvār (IV, 4, 10) and says: '*enṟu (Kalpa-sūtra-vyākhyātā)kkaḷ āṉa Periyâḻvār aruḷi cceytār*'— 'thus spoke Periy., who is a commentator on the *Kalpasutras*'. Raghavan, 1966b, p. 46 note 2, concludes from this: 'Of at least one of the great Tamil Vaiṣṇava Āḻvārs.



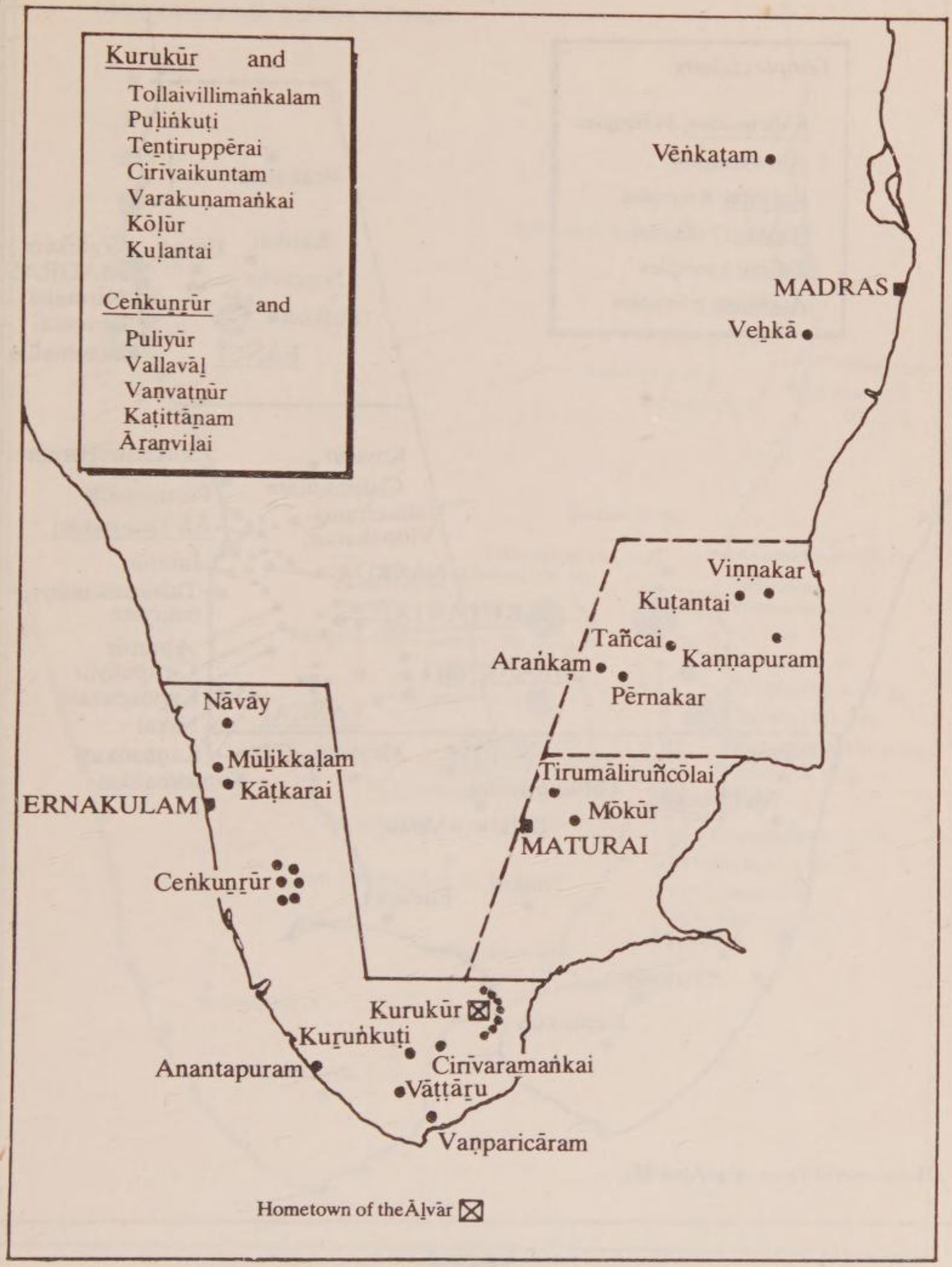
MAP 1

The geographical distribution of all the ninety-six temples referred to by the Āḻvārs, the region covered by the poems of the Āḻvārs (— — — —), and the ancient division (═══) of Tamil Nādu. The figures refer to the number of temples traditionally listed for each district. The borders of modern States are shown by (~ ~ ~ ~ ~ ~).



MAP 2

Temples mentioned in the four *Early Antâtis*.



MAP 3

Temples mentioned by Nammāḻvār.

Temple clusters

Kāñcīpuram: 14 temples

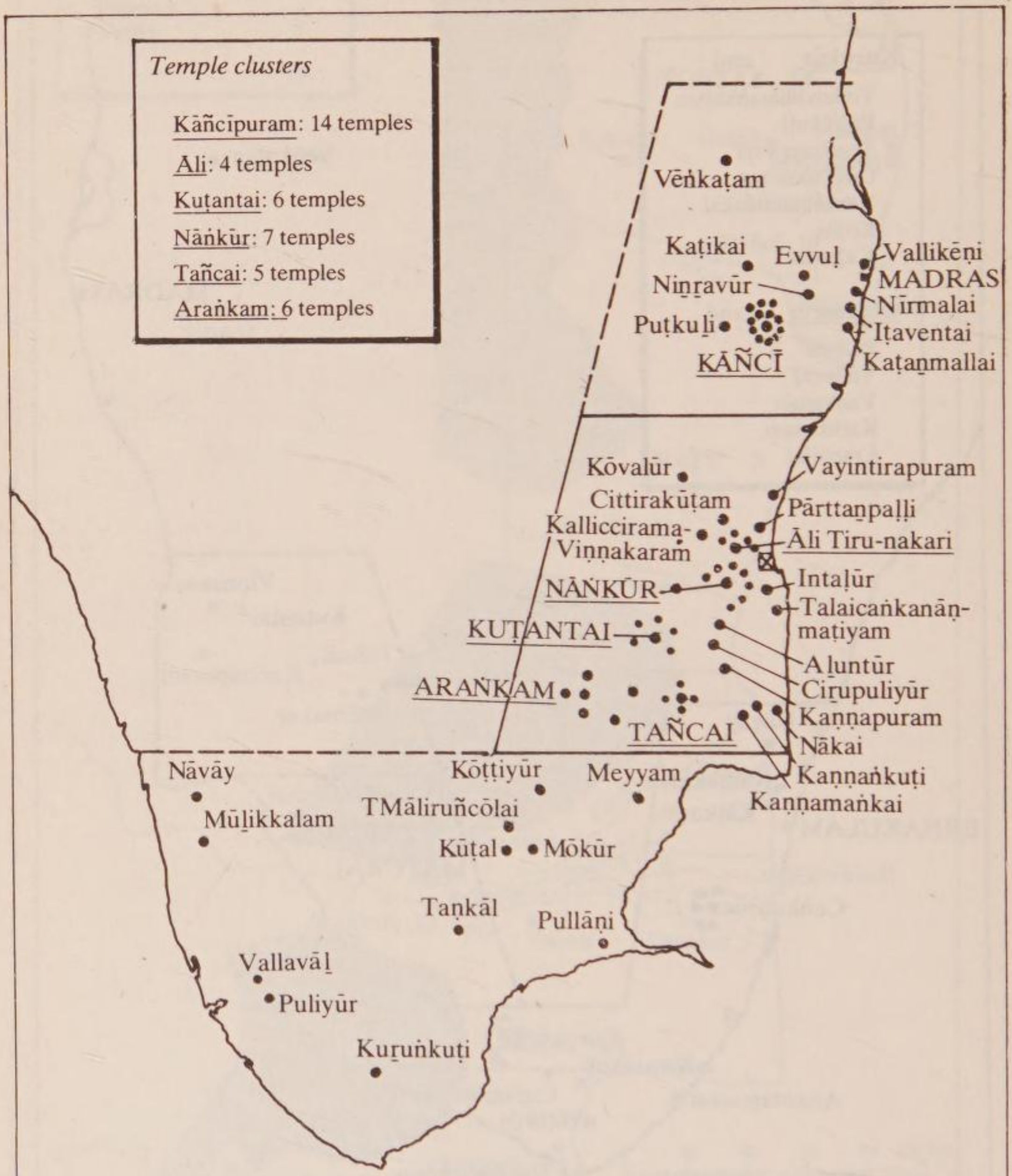
Āli: 4 temples

Kuṭantai: 6 temples

Nāṅkūr: 7 temples

Tañcai: 5 temples

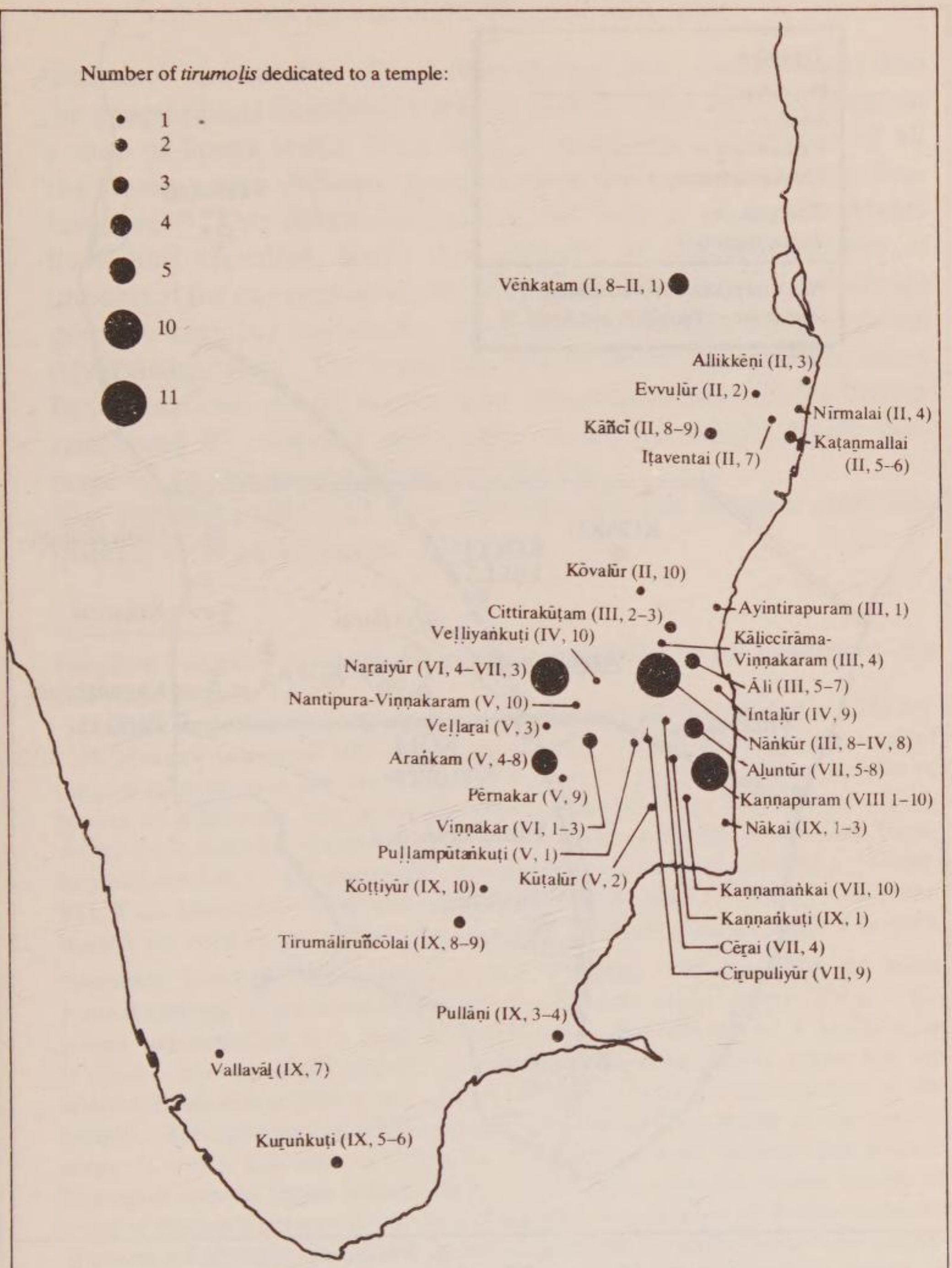
Araṅkam: 6 temples



(Hometown of Tirumaṅkai-Āḻvār ⊠).

MAP 4

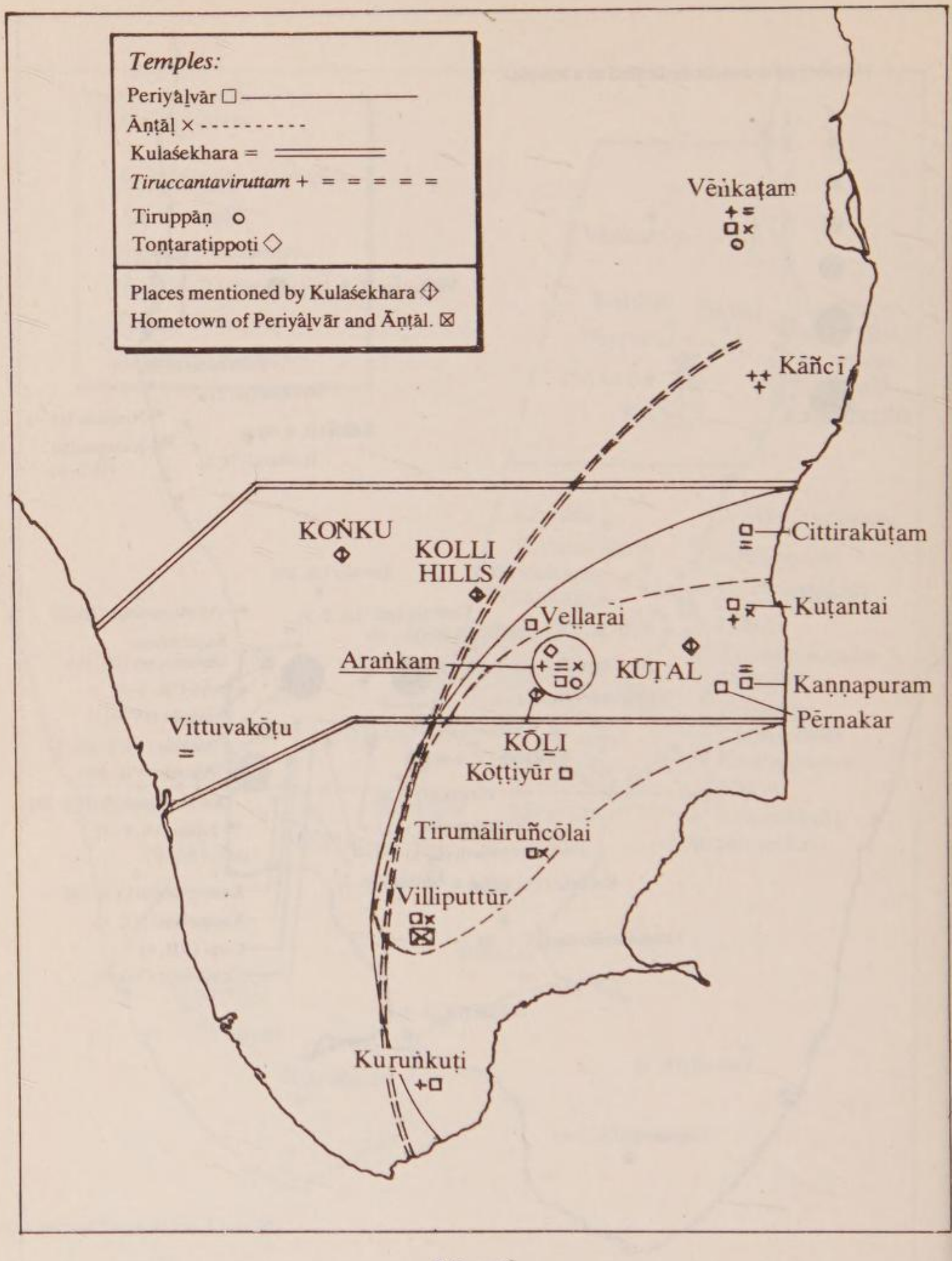
Geographical distribution of temples mentioned by Tirumaṅkai-Āḻvār.



MAP 5

The distribution and frequency of *tirumoḻis* dedicated to temples in Tirumaṅkai's *Periya-Tirumoḻi*.

(figures) = Hundreds and Tens in the *Periya-Tirumoḻi*



MAP 6

Temples mentioned by later Āḻvārs.

temples;[57] the number of such references is vast. Some insight into the geographical distribution will be gained when we enter them on a map of South India. Thus **Map 1** shows the distribution of all the ninety-seven different temples mentioned in the whole *Prabandham*.[58] This delineates roughly the area in which the Āḻvārs lived and travelled. Since the question of different milieux is important for our present study, **Maps 2** to **6** are designed to indicate possible regional variations, by showing the data for individual Āḻvārs separately. The resulting picture is, in my opinion, more lucid than one would expect, and this impression will be further reinforced by religious and poetic variations which closely correspond to the geographical distribution.

The following table XI may illustrate the ten temples most frequently referred to by the Āḻvārs:[59]

Periyâḻvār, we know that he was a reputed commentator on the *Kalpasūtras*'. But this work seems to be lost.

[57] How this dedication is expressed in the poetic style will be discussed in 4.242.5/6.

[58] Śrīvaiṣṇavism gives 108—the sacred number—as the figure for the total of temples referred to in the *Prabandham*. Of these, 97 are South Indian temples or centres of pilgrimage. The remaining *sthalas* and *tīrthas* are in the North: Tiruv Ayōtti (= Ayodhyā), Naimicâraṇiyam, Cāḷakkirāmam, Vatariyâcciramam, Tirukkaṇṭaṅkaṭinakar (= Devaprayāgā), Tiruppiriti (= Joṣimaṭha), Tuvarai (= Dvārakā), Vaṭa Maturai (= Northern Mathurā), Tiruv Āyppāṭi (= Vraja/Vṛndāvana); finally: the Milk-Ocean and the *Paramapada*. All these are listed under *Vaṭa-nāṭu*, 'Northern Country', which includes also Vēṅkaṭam and Ahobilam. In many printed editions of the *Prabandham*, all the references to the temples found in the poems are compiled in a kind of concordance. The edition by Kōpālâcāriyar (Cennai = Madras 1971) includes a *Nūrreṭṭu-ttiruppati-prapāvam*, which has the additional advantage that it also gives (in Tamil) a guide to the localities of the temples. This information has been used for entering the temples on the various maps. It is clear that none of the entries are drawn to scale. Granted that modern Vaiṣṇavas may no longer possess correct information about the precise locality of some of the more provincial and ancient temples, or that some of the more obscure allusions are wrongly interpreted, the information we can gather from these temple-concordances is nevertheless sufficient for our purposes. There is no reason to assume that a careful investigation would essentially alter the total picture obtained from the maps.

[59] References in a *tirumoḻi* are counted only once (even when the name of the temple occurs ten times in the refrain), but for the *Antâtis*, each reference is counted separately.

TABLE XI

(1) Vēṅkaṭam (= Tirupati)	104	(6) Naṟaiyūr	19
(2) Araṅkam (= Śrīraṅgam)	56	(7) Veḫkā (in Kāñcīpuram)	14
(3) Kuṭantai (= Kumbhakonam)	39	(8) Kuṟuṅkuṭi	12
(4) Tirumāliruñcōlai	27	(9) Kōṭṭiyūr	12
(5) Kaṇṇapuram	19	(10) Āli	11

Nos. 1 to 4 are significant for all Āḻvārs, while Nos. 5, 6, 8 and 10 are important only with Tirumaṅkai-Āḻvār. Veḫkā (No. 7) here appears rather marginal; the picture changes somewhat when we look at 'temple clusters' in or around a town.

TABLE XII

(1) Vēṅkaṭam/Ahobilam	105
(2) Kuṭantai cluster	72
(3) Araṅkam cluster	71
(4) Kāñcīpuram cluster	45

We can now turn to the evaluation of the maps.

Map 1 delineates the 'country of the Āḻvārs'. With Vēṅkaṭam as its northern limit, a fairly narrow strip (never broader than about sixty miles) runs along the eastern coast for about 300 miles down to Maturai. The region south and west of Maturai is less densely covered except for clusters of temples around Kurukūr (=Alvartirunagari) and Ceṅkuṉṟūr. For about 200 miles from Cape Comorin, the region along the south-west coast of Kerala expands up to about Ernakulam and Coimbatore in the North. As we can see, a large part of the hinterland (=the central area of Tamilnadu) and of Kerala is left blank. The expansion (from Vēṅkaṭam to Cape Comorin) is about 450 miles — the distance from London to Inverness. The Cōḻa country with forty temples is clearly the centre of gravity.

Map 2 may seem less obvious visually. But the fact that the total number of references to temples in the Vēṅkaṭam-Kāñcī area is seventy-four, compared with thirty-one for all other temples, seems to justify my speaking here of a Vēṅkaṭam-Kāñcī environment,[60] the focus of attention of the Early Āḻvārs. Moreover,

[60] Hagiography tells us that these four Āḻvārs were born in Kāñcī, Kaṭaṉmallai (modern Mahabalipuram), Allikkēṇi (= Triplicane in Madras), and Tirumaḻicai (near Madras).

references to 'temple clusters' (here: Kāñcī) would indicate greater familiarity, and point to the fact that the Āḻvārs' home towns have to be located in this area, which is borne out by hagiography. A comparison with Maps 3, 4 and 5 further justifies this principle. While the four *Antâtis* are on the whole very terse and restrained, each one contains a series of *veṇpās* of a pronounced poetic character dealing with Vēṅkaṭam.[61] Finally, phraseology seems to point to Vēṅkaṭam/Kāñcī as the centre of the Early Āḻvārs. On the one hand, Nammāḻvār speaks of 'holy Vēṅkaṭam in the North'[62] and Tiruveḫkā, which he mentions in TVir 26,[63] appears after a long journey through the 'desert'! On the other hand, Pēy-Āḻvār says that 'Vēṅkaṭam is facing North',[64] while for him Kuṭantai and Kōṭṭiyūr are 'in the South'[65]. It is not difficult to calculate from this the respective geographical positions from which Nammāḻvār and Pēy are looking. All this may seem slender evidence for the assumption that (a) Vēṅkaṭam/Kāñcī is the oldest Āḻvār environment, and (b) the movement spread from here to farther south; but I hope that this hypothesis may be corroborated by the remaining investigations. But we can safely say that already the Early Āḻvārs' attention is directed to the other parts of the Tamil country, and not to the regions north of Vēṅkaṭam.

Map 3, I think, is visually clear: we are dealing here with an altogether different region, which has its centre in southernmost Tamilnadu and Southern Kerala. This corresponds directly to what Nammāḻvār himself states: he is of Kurukūr (note that he refers to eight temples around that town) in the Pāṇḍya country. The total isolation of Vēṅkaṭam can best be explained by assuming that he knew of it only indirectly, presumably through the *Antâtis* of the Early Āḻvārs, and that he sang its praise because it had been hallowed by them. As we shall see, Nammāḻvār who lives in the homeland of *caṅkam* literature does in fact transform the inspiration derived from the Early Āḻvārs by integrating it into the *akattiṇai* tradition.

Maps 4 and **5** illustrate the situation in the works of Tirumaṅkai-Āḻvār, by far the most 'temple-oriented' of the 'sages'. **Map 5**

[61] On this see 4.312.3.
[62] TVir 2, TVM III, 5, 8, etc., *vaṭa tiru Vēṅkaṭam.*
[63] See 4.322, with note 62.
[64] 3rdAnt 73: *vaṭa muka* (<*mukha*) *Vēṅkaṭattu.*
[65] 3rdAnt 62: *teṉ Kuṭantai . . . teṉ Kōṭṭi.*

shows the arrangement of the *Periya-Tirumoḻi*, and the relative importance of the temples mentioned in it. The great number of temples, and the systematic arrangement (based on a *tīrthayātrā* in *pradakṣiṇa* fashion) show that by his time South Indian temple culture had evolved as a complex system. Starting in the North with Vēṅkaṭam, the pilgrimage proceeds towards the South via the large temple complexes in the Tanjore area, and in Kuṟuṅkuṭi, its southernmost point, turns clockwise to the West and then back the North, to end in Kōṭṭiyūr. Here again we can notice that the greatest variety of small shrines occurs in the vicinity of the Āḻvār's hometown, Āli/Maṅkai (compare **Map 4**). Maps 2 and 3 showed that the Cōḻanāṭu is the area in which the Early Āḻvārs' environment overlapped with that of Nammāḻvār, but with Parakālaṉ it forms the actual centre.

Finally, **Map 6** illustrates yet another situation. While Tirumaṅkai-Āḻvār attempted to compile a comprehensive and systematic 'temple geography', we can recognise here a different trend: the concentration on Śrīraṅgam. Tiruppāṇ and Toṇṭaraṭippoṭi deal with it exclusively,[66] and it is the focal point for the remaining poets. Since we can locate the hometown of Periyâḻvār and Aṇṭāḷ, we see (particularly clearly with the latter) that we are dealing now with a *polar situation*: an accidental centre, the hometown, and an institutional focal point, Śrīraṅgam. This might be the case also for Kulacēkaraṉ[67] and the author of the TCV. Vēṅkaṭam remains

[66] Only Tiruppāṇ mentions Vēṅkaṭam twice.

[67] In his case it is quite difficult to identify and locate the various places mentioned by him.

(1) To identify Kūṭal with (Nāṉmāṭa) Kūṭal = Maturai appears implausible, since he could hardly have been a Pāṇṭiya king. It is better to take it as Kūṭal-ūr (//Kōṭṭi for Kōṭṭiy-ūr in 3rdAnt 62), which is a small temple between Kumbakonam and Tanjore, mentioned e.g., PTM V, 2.

(2) Kolli, according to the MTL (which refers to *Puṟa*. 158, 5), is a range of hills in the Trichinopoly district; thus we find *Kolli-ccilampaṉ* 'lord of the Kolli hills' = Cēra.

(3) Kōḻi, according to the MTL (ref. to *Puṟa*. 67, 8) and the comm. *ad* PāḷTM II, 10; IX, 11; X, 11, is the ancient Uṟaiyūr, near Trichinopoly.

(4) Koṅku is said to be (in the MTL) the region of the Coimbatore and Salem districts, and Vittuvakkōṭu (the temple mentioned in the 5th song) is in fact near Trichur. Koṅkaṉ = Cēra, and words like 'Koṅka-rāyar' specifically point to the area north-west of Salem.

Adopting this interpretation, PâḻTM II, 6, 2 *Koṅkuṅ Kuṭantaiyuṅ Kōṭṭiyūrum* would describe a triangle with Śrīraṅgam as its centre. Moreover, there is an ancient

totally isolated and this suggests (as assumed above) that these Āḻvārs also are paying a tribute to a sacred place that is neither a hometown nor significant as an institution for them. The concentration on Śrīraṅgam corresponds to the situation found in early Śrīvaiṣṇavism.[68]

The sequence of Maps **2**, **3**, **4** and **6** corresponds in my opinion to the *chronological developments* of the Āḻvār tradition, to which we may now turn.

4.23 *Chronology*

The previous investigation has shown that the Āḻvārs relate to four specific environments: Vēṅkaṭam/Kāñcī, the Pāṇṭiyanāṭu south of Maturai, the region around, and East of, Kumbakonam and Tanjore, and Śrīraṅgam. This fact by itself would suggest that differences in the character of bhakti expressed by these Āḻvārs are due not only to chronological developments, but also to (possibly synchronic) regional variations. This entails a considerable advantage for our present study, for in view of our almost total lack of chronological data, the fairly extensive information we have about regional ramifications is invaluable. *The chronology which I shall presently attempt can be regarded only as a working hypothesis; I can only claim that in my opinion it provides the most appropriate model for*

Skt. *śloka* (traceable back to the 12th century) in praise of the Āḻvār: *ghuṣyate yasya nagare Raṅga-yātrā dine dine*—'whose town is every day filled with the clamour of the pilgrimages to Śrīraṅgam'. This would make perfect sense, if we locate this 'town' in the Trichinopoly area or identify it with Uṟaiyūr. Unfortunately, Kolli (perhaps more commonly) means also Quilon in Kerala, 200 miles from Śrīraṅgam. The hagiographical works, and certain authors (e.g. Krishnasvami Aiyangar, 1920, p. 41) have adopted this rendering, and Kulaśekhara has become a 'king' of imperial proportions. But the overall evidence would suggest that he was a provincial chieftain, in control of an area as far east (and presumably including it) as Śrīraṅgam and the Kolli hills, and parts of the Salem and Coimbatore districts. Vittuvakkōṭu may well have been his 'home or family temple'.

[68] Nāthamuni's full name is Śrīraṅga-nātha-muni: he is said to have spent some time in Śrīraṅgam. Yāmuna lived there, and Āṇṭāḷ chose the lord of Śrīraṅgam from among 'all the Viṣṇus' of South India (*Divyasūricaritam* canto XII). With Rāmānuja, Śrīraṅgam is clearly the centre of Śrīvaiṣṇavism (compare Das Gupta, 1940, pp. 101-4).

the data we possess. It is only misleading to pretend that we have sufficient evidence to verify any particular chronology.[69]

[69] It is ironic that among all the possible aspects of this highly exciting field of study, Āḻvār religion and culture, writers have picked almost exclusively the least rewarding topic: the dating. This has given rise to endless theories, arguments, controversies, and polemics without leading to many reliable results. To work through these articles and try to disentangle the mass of arbitrary conclusions and errors is a most frustrating undertaking: I spare the reader this painful experience—a full discussion would anyway fill a whole monograph, with few positive results. My major reasons for rejecting many of these studies are: the obsession with astronomical dating, which ultimately has to choose from various alternative dates on the basis of other evidence; fanciful identification of names; arbitrary generalisations; uncritical combination of information provided by the *Prabandham* itself with data from the hagiography. These articles usually offer valuable criticism of theories put forward by previous writers, while each one in turn puts up new theories of an equally untenable nature.

I add here a brief bibliographical survey, but leave it to the specialist of South Indian history to sift the material once again.

It seems that the first attempts to date the Āḻvārs were made at the beginning of the century (besides earlier attempts by Caldwell and others). This created a controversy between S. Krishnaswami Aiyangar on the one hand, and Pichaimuttu, K.G. Sesha Ayyar, and particularly Gopinath Rao, on the other (someone familiar with South Indian sociology may guess from these names where the motives for such a controversy lay). Pichaimuttu, 'Some Points in the Archaeological Report for 1902-3' in *Christian College Magazine*, Madras, 1904. This and an article by Gopinath Rao in *Sen Tamil* (*c.* 1903-4) are criticized by S. Krishnaswami Aiyangar, 'The Age of Nammāḻvār' in: *Christian College Magazine*, Madras, 1904. Gopinath Rao's 'History of the Sri Vaiṣṇava Movement' in: *Madras Review*, 1905, is attacked by S. Krishnaswami Aiyangar in: *Indian Antiquary*, vol. 35, pp. 288-93, 'Tirumaṅkai-Āḻvār and his date'. The same author discusses in his article 'Tirumaṅkai-Āḻvār and Danti-Durga' (*Quarterly Journal of the Mythic Society*, vol. 12, 1921-2) K.G. Sesha Ayyar's article 'Tirumaṅkai-Āḻvār and Danti-Durga' in *Journal of the Mythic Society*, vol. 9, No. 4. (The three articles by S. Krishnaswami Aiyangar are reprinted in: *Ancient India and South Indian History and Culture*, vol. 2: *South Indian History and Culture*, Poona, 1941, pp. 729–35; 736–50; 751–62.) The opinions which Gopinath Rao and S.Krishnaswami expressed in their respective papers were consolidated in two lecture-series given in Madras and consequently published: T.A. Gopinatha Rao (delivered December 1917) Madras, 1923, and S. Krishnaswami Aiyangar, Madras, 1920.

A second controversy arose a few years later, again in Madras, between M. Raghava Aiyangar and K. G. Sankar, which is reflected in a series of articles in the *Journal of Oriental Research*, University of Madras. Pandit M. Raghava Aiyangar, 'The Date of Śrī Āṇṭāḷ', vol. 1, 2, April 1927, pp. 157-66; K.G. Sankar, 'The Date of Tiruppāvai', ibid. pp. 167-9, and with reference to M. Raghava's article

The following three points, in my opinion, deserve a more detailed discussion.

(1) 2nd Ant. 70 mentions, as a Vaiṣṇava temple, Māmallai, which is the modern Mahabalipuram famous for its early Pallava architecture.[70] It has been suggested[71] that the Early Āḻvārs 'must have been after the middle of the seventh century, when the present Mahabalipuram came to be known as Mallai'. The reason for this assumption is said to be that the Pallava king Narasiṃhavarman I, who was called *Mahāmalla* 'the great athlete', ruled 630-688. This is a highly dubious argument. We know from inscriptions that already Mahendra-varman I (580-630) had as one of his attributes *śatru-malla* 'champion against foes',[72] and according to this type of logic, that would be an equally 'appropriate' explanation of 'Mā-mallai'. However, it appears more reasonable to assume as the basis, *mā mallai y ūr*, which can be rendered either as: 'the town/temple of great prosperity', or as 'the temple of the begging bowl',[73] thus referring to the Vāmana myth which after all gave rise to the other name Mahābalipuram.[74] Thus it is not possible to conclude from this that 650 or 700, which appears to be far too late for other reasons, is the *terminus a quo* for the Early Āḻvārs.

Contemporaries of Periyâḻvār', vol. I, 4, October 1927, pp. 336-50. M. Raghava's reply is found in vol. II, 1 January 1928, pp. 57-61, 'Date of Periyâḻvār'. By the same author also: 'Tirumaṅkai-Āḻvār and Cāḷukya Vikramâditya', vol. III, 1, January 1929, pp. 74-9.

Since then, various authors have made indiscriminate use of any of these articles or lectures, confusing the situation more than adding positive evidence. Some examples are: R.G. Bhandarkar, 1913; J.S.M. Hooper, 1929 (pp. 10f); S. Krishnaswami Aiyangar, 1940 (where on pp. 52-184 he repeats his opinions expressed in earlier papers); S. Das Gupta, 1940 (pp. 63-9); Vaiyapuri Pillai, 1954; K.A. Nilakanta Sastri, 1966 (pp. 370f; 426f); R. Mukerjee, 1957 (pp. 63-6); C. and H. Jesudasan, 1961; J. Filliozat, 1972 (pp. ix-xi); Zvelebil 1975 (pp. 152-62). The last-mentioned work contains a very extensive bibliography on the Āḻvārs.

70 According to Nilakanta Sastri, 1966, pp. 149f, Siṃhaviṣṇu, the founder of the dynasty, and his son Mahendravarman I (AD 580-630) are depicted in a relief found in the Varāha cave.

71 For example, Jesudasan, 1961, p. 94, or Das Gupta, 1940, p. 65.

72 See Barnett, 1928-30, pp. 697f, and note 1 on p. 698; there also the inscriptions are listed.

73 *Mallai* in this case MTL *mallai*[2] 'a mendicant's begging-bowl', DED 3884 (where various Skt. and Prakrit words are mentioned).

74 Vāmana, in the guise of a *brahmacārī*, approached Bali holding a begging-bowl in his hand. Another example of naming a temple after a mythical incident is *Kavit-*

(2) The only positive evidence for any date concerns Tirumaṅkai-Āḻvār, who must have lived during the second half of the eight century AD. First, it is fairly certain that Nandivarman II Pallavamalla (731-796) or his predecessor Parameśvaravarman I (670-700) built the Vaikuṇṭaperumāḷ temple in Kāñcī,[75] which is also called Parameśvara-Viṇṇakar(am); Tirumaṅkai-Āḻvār praises the temple in PTM II, 9. Similarly, PTM V, 10 is dedicated to Nandipuram Viṇṇakaram, and 'Nandi' might point to the same Nandivarman. Secondly, PTM II, 8 (about the Kāñcī shrine Aṭṭapuyakaram), in stanza 10 states: 'Kacci (=Kāñcīpuram) surrounded by the [threatening] strength, and [filled] with the fame, of Vayiramēkaṉ.'[76] Now it is known that a Rāṣṭrakūṭa king Dantidurga (*c.*752-6), with the epithet Vairamegha (<Skt. *vajra*> Prakrit *vayira*) 'went down to Kāñcī, and, after a demonstration of force, struck up an alliance with Nandivarman II Pallavamalla (731-796) to whom he gave his daughter Revā.'[77] Thirdly, PTM II, 9, as a kind of refrain in all nine stanzas, refers to a battle between a Pallava king and the 'Teṉṉaṉ' (=Pāṇṭiya). Such a battle is known to have taken place (*c.* 750?) between Nandivarman and the Pāṇṭiya king Māṟavarman Rajasiṃha I (730-65) or his son Parāntaka (756-815).[78] Fourthly, in the same song (stanza 9), the Āḻvār betrays a most detailed knowledge of this Pallava king Nandivarman. He speaks of him as 'the king of the Pallavas who possesses a drum of a harsh "mouth", the sound of which is like the roaring of the ocean'.[79] A contemporary Cālukya inscription in Sanskrit (*c.* 750) speaks about the king as possessing 'a special musical instrument called [=comparable to] the roaring of the ocean and noisy with a harsh "mouth"'.[80] Taking all this evidence together,

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talam = *kapi* + *sthala* 'temple of the monkey' which refers to Hanumān, or *Tēr-aḻunt'-ūr* 'the temple where the chariot came down'.

[75] *South Indian Inscriptions*, vol. 4, p. 11; compare Nilakanta Sastri, 1966, p. 157.

[76] *Vayiramēkaṉ taṉ vali, taṉ pukaḻ cūḻnta Kacci. Vali* 'strength' would have associations with 'threat' and 'arrogance' (see the MTL for the different meanings of the word).

[77] Nilakanta Sastri, 1966, p. 156; compare p. 210. See also Subrahmanya Aiyar, 1911-2, p. 156.

[78] Nilakanta Sastri, 1966, pp. 155f.

[79] *Kaṭal pōl muḻaṅkum kuraṟ kaṭu vāy ppaṟaiyuṭai Pallavar kōṉ.*

[80] The Vakkaleri and Kendur grants of Kīrtivarman II Calukya (744-55) referred to by Gopinath Rao, 1923, p. 25 (the king's dates according to Nilakanta Sastri, 1966, p. 170): '*kaṭu-mukha-vāditra-samudra-ghoṣâbhidhāna-vādya-viśeṣam*'.

it appears justified to say that the Alvār is speaking about Nandivarman II as his contemporary, which suggests the later eighth century AD as the period during which he flourished.

(3) A *terminus ad quem* for the Āḻvārs may be gained on the basis of the information we possess about the early Viśiṣṭâdvaita. Our basic date is AD 1137, the year of Rāmānuja's death. Rāmānuja was greatly influenced by various disciples of Yāmuna, but hagiography clearly states that the two *ācāryas* did not meet personally. AD 1037 which is given as the year in which Yāmuna died, would agree with this.[81] Thus AD 950 or 960 may be the year of his birth. Yāmuna's grandfather was Nāthamuni, and the latter thus ought to have been born around 900.[82] Thus the earlier part of the tenth century would be the *terminus ad quem* for the latest material in the *Prabandham*.

We may now turn to placing these few facts in the context of the data offered by the *Prabandham* itself. Much effort has been spent on discussing the relative chronology of the Āḻvārs, but this is a futile undertaking when done with reference to the hagiographical works.[83] Instead, I prefer to consider style, content, and geo graphical distribution with reference to the problem of relative chronology.

(1) Map 2 has shown us that the four authors of the first four *Antâtis* cover an area left practically blank by *caṅkam* literature: Vēṅkaṭam/Kāñcī; we have only one document concerning Kāñcī,

[81] I think one can explain the fact that the hagiographical works postulate AD 1017 as the year of birth for Rāmānuja (so that he would have lived for 120 years). Thus he would already have been grown up before Yāmuna died, and it was therefore possible to write about the two meetings between the two ācāryas which *almost* happened. To bring two outstanding personalities into personal contact regardless of any anachronism is a universal feature in hagiography.

[82] For a similar line of argument see S. Krishnaswami Aiyangar, 1920, pp. 57-60 But note that (p. 57) AD 922 is given as Nāthamuni's year of death, while (p. 60) he is said to have been born in 900.

[83] There is no agreement between the various sources; but in one particular case it is possible to reconstruct the *rationale* for a different sequence. If it was assumed that (a) Nāthamuni received the *Prabandham* (or the TVM) through *personal* contact with Madhurakavi, and (b) this Āḻvār was the *immediate* disciples of Nammālvār, the latter would have to be placed in the penultimate position. Or again, Nammāḻvār would appear in a separate position (viz. as last in the sequence), if the author was referring to the Śrīvaiṣṇava *guruparampara*, because he alone among the Āḻvārs figures there as *guru*. Finally we have another tradition (which may be the most original) which separates Madhurakavi from Nammāḻvār, and the former again from Nāthamuni by a certain period of time.

and that presumably of an early date, *c.* third century AD. This means that we possess no material with which we could compare these *Antâtis*. Theoretically one might date these Āḻvārs as far back as the third or fourth century,[84] but this would seem exaggerated. If we postulate the sixth or early seventh century, this could account, on the one hand, for the literary style (*Antâti* and *veṇpā*, not known at an earlier period),[85] for the similarities with Kāraikkāl Ammaiyār (said to be *c.* 550) and the pronounced bhakti culture of the *Paripāṭal*, and on the other hand for the considerable developments and changes which Tirumaṅkai-Āḻvār shows in the eight century. The *terminus a quo* could be somewhat earlier, if anything. That these *Antâtis* constitute the earliest layer in the *Prabandham* is not only unanimously agreed upon by all hagiographical works, but also borne out by the archaisms pervading style and content.[86] The (unknown) poets of these four *Antâtis* will be called here the Early or Northern Āḻvārs.

(2) We know from Map 3 that Nammāḻvār belongs to an environment which is well-documented from the early centuries AD to about the sixth or seventh century. When we compare his works with the results obtained in 3.00, I do not think that the *terminus a quo* provides difficulties here. The Āḻvār fully integrates the *akattiṇai* into bhakti, which is far more advanced in its emotionalism than the Tirumāl hymns of the *Paripāṭal*; he has integrated the inspiration from the Early Āḻvārs into *caṅkam* culture, and the great number of temples mentioned by him indicates a well-developed 'Vaiṣṇava' situation. All this would speak in favour of a date

[84] This is done by Krishnaswami Aiyangar, 1920, pp. 67-80, for example, who identifies Poykai-Āḻvār with the *caṅkam* poet Poykaiyār and makes all Early Āḻvārs contemporaries of Toṇṭaimāṉ Iḷantiraiyāṉ mentioned in the *Perump*. (third century AD).

[85] Pallava inscriptions appear in Tamil from about AD 550, replacing those earlier ones in Prakrit and then in Skt. The cultivation of Tamil by these Āḻvārs may not be unrelated to this change.

[86] I am unable to comment on the relative chronology of the four *Antâtis* themselves. One could perhaps detect a certain increase of emotional intensity from First to Third, while Fourth appears rather archaic. After all, 4th Ant begins with Nāṉmukaṉ'—'Four-Faced (Brahmā)'—which might have impelled the compiler to place the work in the *fourth* position; but the author himself may thereby have been alluding to the earlier three poems. But note that in v. 1 he speaks of himself as 'the first' to expound in *Antâti*-form the divine mysteries (*yāṉ mukam āy antâti mēl iṭṭu arivittēṉ āḻ poruḷai*).

slightly later than most of the material discussed above in 3.00, in other words, the seventh or early eighth century. Turning now to the question of *terminus ad quem*, I think that here again it is fairly reasonable to consider Nammāḷvār earlier than Tirumaṅkai-Āḷvār. The former is still 'provincial' and unfamiliar with the temples in the Cōḷa-and Toṇṭaināṭu, while the latter is not only aware of the whole 'Āḷvār country' but also presents the temples systematically. Nammāḷvār is still in close touch with the *Antâti* and *veṇpā* forms (compare his own *Periyatiruvantâti* and the *antâti* feature in TVir and TVM), while Parakālaṉ in spite of his familiarity with the Kāñcī-environment abandons these stylistic features and replaces them by new literary forms. Again, a considerable speculative power links Nammāḷvār with the Early Āḷvārs while in Parakālaṉ we can detect a certain mannerism and formalism.[87] We even have a hagiographical account about Tirumaṅkai-Āḷvār institutionalizing the recitation of the TVM in Śrīraṅgam.[88] It would seem to fit the overall evidence best if we assume the seventh (or early eighth) century for Nammāḷvār.
(3) Concerning Periyâḷvār and Āṇṭāḷ, the situation is more difficult. The popular character of their poetry might be taken as suggesting an early date, but then we have no basis, other than the wishful thinking of some authors, for the assumption that the movement started on the popular level. Placing the Early Āḷvārs and Nammāḷvār in the sixth and seventh century respectively, it would be absurd to date these two even earlier: after all they again belong to the Maturai environment, but their poetry bears no resemblance to the material encountered in 3.00. It is only possible to connect them vaguely to Tamil folk-culture via Nammāḷvār, and even then the differences are considerable. On the other hand, through Map 6 (Śrīraṅgam as institutional focus) a link with early Śrīvaiṣṇavism is not difficult, nor is a connection with the *Bhāgavatapurāṇa* (later half of ninth century?) on the basis of common treatment of Kṛṣṇa mythology. Since in Tirumaṅkai-

[87] It is not impossible that he elaborated certain *motifs* from Nammāḷvār. See 4.331, where the TVM and the PTM are frequently compared.

[88] Found in the (3000) *Guruparamparāprabhāvam*, p. 51. 'Tirumaṅkai-Āḷvār . . . had in Tiruvaraṅkam the *Tiruvāymoḷi* recited . . . for the ten days of the month Mārkali beginning with the bright *ekādaśī*. He called this the Festival of Sacred Recitation.' Naturally it is not possible to decide the historical value of this.

Āḻvār we do not find either such a pronounced concentration on Śrīraṅgam or such an advanced treatment of Kṛṣṇa myths, he should be earlier, and thus I would tentatively place Periyâḻvār and Āṇṭāḷ in the ninth century. Nammāḻvār, Parakālaṉ, Periyâḻvār, and Āṇṭāḷ will be called the Major Āḻvārs.

(4) Stylistic similarities, a pronounced emotionalism and frank eroticism in the treatment of Kṛṣṇa myths, the structural pattern of Map 6, and the stress on Rāma—all these features would indicate that Kulaśekhara was roughly contemporary with Periyâḻvār and Āṇṭāḷ.

(5) Madhurakavi's attitude towards Nammāḻvār, of whose TVM he mentions himself to be a reciter, is not that of a direct disciple; the clear deification of Śaṭhakōpa which he expresses indicates that the latter must have lived sometime in the past. If hagiography is correct about Nāthamuni's receiving the TVM from Madhurakavi, we would have to assume a date as late as the tenth century; otherwise he could have lived during the eighth or ninth century.

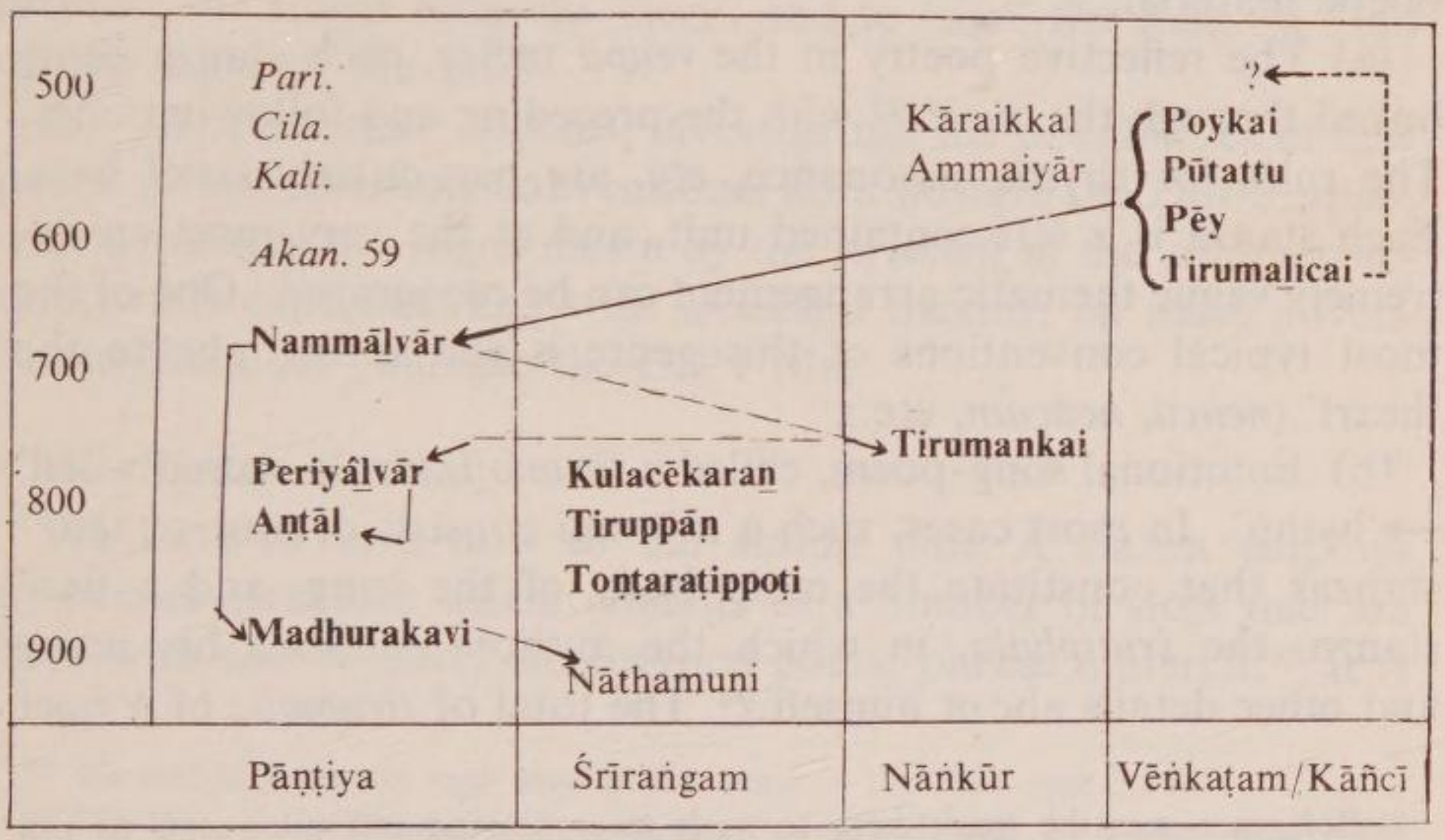
(6) The apotheosis of Śrīraṅgam, which Toṇṭaraṭippoṭi expresses, and the highly elaborate ritual song he wrote (TPaḷ) favour the assumption of a late date for him, viz. perhaps the ninth or even early tenth century. Contemporary with him, or slightly earlier, must have been Tiruppāṇ who in a different manner exemplifies a similar apotheosis of Śrīaṅgam. Madhurakavi, Toṇṭaraṭippoṭi, Tiruppāṇ, and the author of the TCV will be called Minor Āḻvārs.

If we accept the chronology obtained here, we find the rather remarkable fact that the relative sequence of the Āḻvārs corresponds precisely to the author-sequence of Book III followed by Book I (see Table X). There is obviously room for minor variations, particularly in the case of more or less contemporary Āḻvārs like Periyâḻvār, Āṇṭāḷ, Kulacēkaraṉ, and Tiruppāṇ. But how could this be explained? I find it hard to imagine that the compiler of the *Prabandham* was aware of any precise chronological sequence of the Āḻvārs. But it would be possible that he had some *corpus* in front of him which had been growing organically over the centuries. There is no evidence that he himself collected *all* works as separate pieces of local literature. Even hagiography agrees

only on his discovering the TVM[89] and his setting the whole *Prabandham* to a religious style of music; also the final arrangement in four Books and the rationale of their sequence[90] may be attributed to him. But it seems by no means implausible that his basic source was something like a bardic *corpus* which had developed during some centuries.

The following Table XIV may illustrate the chronology suggested here (compare also Table IX).

TABLE XIV



4.24 *Poetic characteristics of the Āḻvārs' songs*

Before we can seriously try to analyse the religious content of the Āḻvārs' poetry, it is necessary to look at the poetic structure of their songs. Their poetic style differs quite considerably from both the '*caṅkam*' one and the Sanskrit poetics; it represents a highly developed song-culture of considerable structural complexity. Granted that such an investigation would under normal circum-

[89] There is a clear logical break in all the hagiographical accounts; initially Nāthamuni went in search of the TVM alone, but then suddenly he requests Nammāḻvār (in a vision) for all the works. Moreover, the Āḻvār is said to have then taught him all the important texts of the Śrīvaiṣṇavas, the whole *Prabandham* being only one of them. It looks as if originally the whole story of the rediscovery concerned exclusively the TVM, and not the other works in the *Prabandham*.

[90] See 4.21 above.

stances be the province of literary history or analysis, it is nevertheless essential to discuss this topic in the context of the present study, since not only is such an analysis nowhere available, but the intricacies of the poetic structure have given rise to considerable distortions in the religious interpretation.[91] At the same time, this allows me to explain the manner in which I have dealt with the sources in the following chapter.

4.241 *Basic division*

The whole *Prabandham* can be divided into three groups of different poetic material.

(a) The reflective poetry in the *veṇpā* metre, each stanza being linked through the *antâti*[92] with the preceding and following ones. The rules for rhyme, assonance, etc. are particularly strict here. Each stanza is a self-contained unit, and at the very most an extremely vague thematic arrangement can be recognized. One of the most typical conventions of this genre is the apostrophe to the 'heart' (*neñcu, neñcam*, etc.).

(b) Emotional song-poem, called a *tirumoḻi*, viz. 'a sacred word' →'hymn'. In most cases, such a *tirumoḻi* consists of nine or ten[93] stanzas that constitute the main body of the song, and a final stanza, the *śrutiphala*, in which the author mentions his name and other details about himself.[94] The total of *tirumoḻis* of a poet

[91] Reference may be made here to such misconceived interpretations as put forward by Hooper, Das Gupta, Gail, and Zvelebil. Hooper, who was unaware of the *caṅkam* style and conventions, imposes an allegorical interpretation upon the TVir which is alien to the character of the work. Das Gupta, basing his conclusions on a late Skt. summary of the TVM, speaks about 'Śaṭhakopa's main ideal' as 'to regard all beings as but women dependent on Him' (1940, p. 70) and says (*ad* TVM IV, 2) that the Āḻvār 'considers himself as a woman' (ibid, p. 72). Zvelebil repeats this: 'It is usually the *bhakta* who turns into a woman [sic!] craving for the embrace of the Lord; i.e., the human soul is female, God male. Exceptionally, as in . . . TKō, the soul is male and the Lord the lady-love.' (1973, p. 198 note 1; on the TKō, for which this interpretation—found in some commentaries—is equally inappropriate, see below 4.323.) The mistake made here is to confuse an emotional-poetic convention with an ontological-theological statement.

[92] *Antâti* (<Skt. *anta* + *ādi*) means the repetition (frequently only in its sound-form) of the final word of a stanza as the first word of the following stanza, e.g., . . . *enru/enru* (1stAnt 1/2).

[93] In a few cases, more stanzas are found: PTM X, 7: 14; PâḻTM I, 3: 21; TPā: 30; TMāl: 45.

[94] Such information has been analysed above. The *śrutiphala* is absent in Aāp.

is (again) called a *Tirumoḻi*, which is then qualified by the poet's honorific name, *Periyâḻvār-Tirumoḻi*, *Nācciyār* (=Lady)–*TM*, *Perumāḷ* (<the Cēra dynastic title)–*TM*, or by an attribute like *Periya* (=Great)–*TM*. The major work of Nammāḻvār differs in some respects: here the individual songs are called *tiru-vāy-moḻi*, and thus the whole work: *Tiruvāymoḻi* 'the Sacred Veda'.[95] Since its only distinguishing characteristic is the *antâti* feature, I shall simply use 'tirumoḻi' in most cases to refer to the whole genre, and 'tiruvāymoḻi' only when specific reference has to be made to Nammāḻvār's poems.[96] The function of the *śrutiphala*[97] is both to promise the singer religious merit, and to 'sign' the song—a kind of copyright of the poet.

(c) 'Experimental' poems, investigating the possibilities of new poetic forms. On more conventional lines we have the *Tiruviruttam*, which replaces the *veṇpā* metre by the *viruttam* in the *antâti* structure, while experimenting with *akattiṇai* themes; on more adventurous lines, for example the C/PT Maṭ.

4.242 *Phrase material*

We have to turn now to the stanza unit. A stanza employs an overall structure which consists of a number of slots that are filled with sets of fairly stereotyped poetic phrase material.[98] It is

[95] We find already *vāy moḻi* used in this sense in the *Pari.* (see 3.64).

[96] The three long *Tirumoḻis* (Periyâḻvār-, Periya-TM, and TVM) are subdivided into Tens', thus consisting of ten *tirumoḻis* each. The Tens are indicated here by Roman figures, the first Arabic figure refers to the individual *tirumoḻi* within that Ten, and the second to the stanza—lines are not distinguished. The traditional manner of quoting a song is by taking the first two or three words; this explains the titles of works which consist of only one *tirumoḻi*: 'Amalaṉ āti ppirāṉ. . .', 'Kaṇṇi nuṇ ciṟu tāmpu. . .'

[97] There is no *śrutiphala* to the *Antâtis*, just as it is unknown in *caṅkam* poetry. But it is a common feature in Northern vernacular works, e.g., the *Caryāpadas*, although not prior to the ninth or tenth century A.D. There is no reason to doubt the authenticity of these stanzas in the *tirumoḻis*. (1) In the TVM, each stanza connects with the following one through the *antâti*, and this includes the *śrutiphala*, which in turn is linked with the subsequent song. This would have been a difficult task indeed for an editor. The commentators on the TVM take them to be authentic. (2) We obtain the figure 4000 only by including all *śrutiphalas* (c. 275). Kāraikkāl Ammaiyār's *Aṟputa-Tiruvantâti* has a *śrutiphala* (101).

[98] There are definite 'oral-bardic' features found here: many song units are frequently repeated in various works with only minor variations; this makes it difficult to speak of literary borrowings. An extensive study, on the lines of Kailasapathy's

not necessary for our purposes to attempt a completé catalogue of such sets or their elements, but their autonomy in relation to each other and their respective functions in connection with the 'meaning' of the whole poem are of the greatest importance here. The following represents my own tentative classification.

(1) *Ornamentation* 'Flowers whose nature is fragrance',[99] 'ocean [filled with] water', 'world [consisting of] three parts',[100] 'cormorant, shy and with beautiful wings',[101] etc. These ornamental descriptions which to a great extent go back to *caṅkam* phrase material, are stereotyped expressions which add nothing to the meaning of the word qualified. It is only occasionally, and then with original phrases, that a pregnant usage can be detected: 'swans of pleasant walk and united with your females by good fortune'.[102] Here the happy union between male and female swan serves to intensify the girl's own loneliness. But it gave rise to considerable distortions, when the medieval commentaries (or modern interpreters), unaware of the historical roots and the purely functional nature of such ornamentation, tried to read significance into every phrase.[103]

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analysis of *puṟam* phraseology or Emeneau's concordance of Toda song units, would be necessary to determine the precise technique of composition used by the Āḻvārs.

[99] 2ndAnt 3.

[100] Ibid., 5.

[101] TVM I, 4, 1 *aṅ ciṟaiya maṭa nārāy*!

[102] TVM I, 4, 3.

[103] In TVir 11 we read: 'thy fish-like eyes. . .' (Hooper, 1929, p. 64), into which Hooper tries to read significance by saying: 'Note also that Viṣṇu's first incarnation was a fish. . .' (ibid. note 1). The comparison of fish and eye is a very common piece of ornamentation.

The commentators in their search for esoteric meaning identified the 'cormorant' with the *guru*, which then allowed them to give the 'wings' the allegorical meaning 'knowledge' (*ad* TVM I, 4, 1); e.g., *Ācāryahṛdaya sūtra* 150 and Maṇavāḷa Māmuṉi's commentary on the *sūtra* (pp. 65f). This is not so in the oldest commentaries (viz. 6000, 9000, and 12,000), which take a fairly 'realistic' position. Although they do not recognize in 'beautiful wings' the traditional *caṅkam* phraseology, they do not read too much into it. 'You have wings which allow you to go wherever you want to' (6,000, p. 168), this in contrast to the lonely girl who cannot go to her lover; 'wings . . . enabling you to go on the errand mentioned by me' (12,000, p. 168),—the song is a messenger poem. With the *Īṭu* and the 24,000, we proceed one stage further: 'she fixed her eyes on the wings, *just as* a pupil—once he has realized

(2) *Paraphrases* 'He who is adorned with the *tulsī*',[104] 'He who rides on the bird with strong wings'.[105] Although the Āḻvārs know a fair variety of names for Kṛṣṇa, in order to avoid monotony—and for the sake of imaginative poetic play—they commonly use longer paraphrases.[106] Stylistically, this is common in *caṅkam* poetry, but while there it is permitted in order to include *karus* or *uḷḷuṟai-uvamais*,[107] as a rule this does not apply to the Āḻvārs. Frequently part of the paraphrase is involved in a sound-play.[108] On the whole, I have rendered such paraphrases simply as 'Kṛṣṇa' in my translations, while mere ornamentation is altogether ignored.

(3) *Mythological references* 'You who that day measured the world',[109] 'to worship the feet of Our Great One (Em pirāṉ) who in the past ate up this whole world'.[110] In the majority of cases, these allusions are marked by adverbs like 'that day', 'in former times', etc. Here we are now dealing with a feature that—quite apart from functional and poetic usages—is directly related to Āḻvār bhakti. Such references specify 'the lover' (in 'girl poems'), maintain the devotee's awareness that the local temple god is identical with the eternal Kṛṣṇa (in 'temple-poems'), and symbolize *in nucleo* one form of bhakti: meditation on the mysteries of Kṛṣṇa's mythical deeds. But such specific usage must not be mistaken for an integral function in relation to the 'story' as 'plot' level of the

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the knowledge a teacher [possesses]—will cling to him devotedly' (*Īṭu* p. 170; 24,000, p. 169). What is still a metaphor here, is finally taken literally by the *Arumpatavurai*: 'In the esoteric sense, "wing" *signifies* "jñāna" (p. 170). However interesting such trends in the interpretation are for the intellectual history of Śrīvaiṣṇavism, the analysis of the *Prabandham* itself has to remain on more objective grounds. This means: to see in the phrase *'añ ciṟaiya . . nārāy*!' the (ossified?) survival of *caṅkam* bardic phraseology. In *Kuṟu*. 296, 2 we do find *'añ ciṟai nārai*'— 'the cormorant with beautiful wings'.

104 2ndAnt 33.

105 TVM I, 4, 1: *veñ ciṟai ppuḷḷ uyarttār*.

106 We found already in the *caṅkam* poems paraphrases like 'he who is armed with the discus', etc. Compare 3.711.

107 *Kuṟu*. 3: 'My love for him of the country where bees make rich honey from the *kuṟiñci* flowers . . . on the mountain slopes'. The flower and the mountain are *karus* for the *kuṟiñcittiṇai*; the country which belongs to the lover symbolizes the gratification he gives to her passionate love. This is borne out by the *uḷḷuṟai-uvamai* 'where bees make rich honey'.

108 In TVM I, 4, 1 we have *añ ciṟaiya . . . veñ ciṟai . . .*

109 2ndAnt 30.

110 TVM VII, 9, 7.

songs. In principle, they must be kept separate;[111] as a rule they have been translated only when they appeared poignantly used.

(4) *Attributions* In function closely related to the previous 'mythological allusions' is a vaguely defined set of philosophical or theological titles, mythical and iconographic descriptions, etc. 'O Pirāṉ with the body [resembling] the broad[112] ocean'.[113] 'Illustrious one, resorted to by those who have investigated the four Vedas'.[114] 'He with the discus as his weapon,'[115] 'He who is full of pleasures'.[116] With these titles and attributes, a poem acquires certain focal points of reflection and meditation around which the concrete aspects of Kṛṣṇa and bhakti can be gathered, while the awareness of transcendence is maintained.

(5) *Temple references* These can be expressed in different ways. As attribute: 'He who resides in Tirumāliruñcōlai';[117] 'Ammāṉ of Kaṇṇapuram';[118] 'I (who am the lord) of Aṭṭapuyakara'.[119] As sentence 'Aḻuntūr is the town . . . . where Emperumāṉ lives'[120] or metaphorically: 'She worships Kaṇṇapuram. . .'[121] We found

[111] This may be illustrated from PTM X, 8, in which song a *gopī* scolds Kṛṣṇa for his unfaithfulness. In stanza 9 she addresses him: 'you who love the *kuravai* with the cowherd girl, . . . having abandoned . . . Tiru and Earth!' It would be wrong to explain this reference as a direct reason for the *gopī*'s anger. The 'Cowherd girl' is Piṉṉai, warranted by the mention of Tiru and Earth. The 'dancing of the *kuravai*' is a mythological reference, which creates a seeming logical contradiction, since we might be tempted to identify the plot-level (*gopī* scolding Kṛṣṇa) with the functional usage of the 'mythological reference' (Kṛṣṇa dances the *kuravai* with a *gopī*). But a closer look at the *kuravai*-myth as treated in the *Prabandham* shows that it never forms part of the plot-level of a poem, not even when (as here) this is mythical and involves a *gopī*. To draw this distinction will allow us (on a more general plane) to infer typical features of the Āḻvārs' treatment of myths, and in this particular case, to discover the pregnant usage of the reference: the *quasi-real gopī* compares her own fate to that of the *mythical* figures of Tiru and Earth—in both cases Kṛṣṇa has been unfaithful, and that with cowherd girls.

[112] 'Broad' is simply an ornamentation; the comparison concerns the blue colour of the ocean.

[113] 2ndAnt 30.

[114] PTM IV, 8, 3.

[115] Compare note 106; the two sets merge in such cases; ibid. 8.

[116] Ibid., 9.

[117] PTM IX, 9.

[118] PTM VIII, 1.

[119] PTM II, 8: '*Aṭṭapuyakaraṭṭēṉ*'.

[120] PTM VII, 5.

[121] PTM VIII, 2, 1.

a few examples of such references in the *caṅkam corpus* and I attempted to analyse them on the basis of a shift in patronage from the king to the temple institution. In the *Prabandham*, this has emerged as a universal feature. As far as poetic structure and bhakti are concerned, we can add the following functions: (a) These references specify the lover (as Kṛṣṇa) in love-poems, and constitute, metaphorically speaking, 'karus' of a new poetic landscape. (b) To maintain the equilibrium between the transcendental or mystical aspects of Kṛṣṇa and his local, quasi-physical presence in the temple. (c) To make reference *in nucleo* to temple worship as part of bhakti. In late works, such references appear to suggest almost an apotheosis of the temple (Śrīraṅgam) itself. Not infrequently, more than one reference may occur in one poem, functionally differentiated.[122]

(6) *Temple descriptions* Often a simple 'temple reference' expands to a larger descriptive passage, e.g.: 'Pullāṇi where jewels are carried ashore by the fighting waves of the ocean.'[123] The particular significance of such descriptions can be gathered from the fact that already in the *Early Antâtis* the terse and concise style changes to an elaborate pen-picture, when the temple on Vēṅkaṭam is referred to; e.g.: 'Vēṅkaṭam with the noisy and glittering water of the full waterfalls, that reaches up to the moon.'[124] It seems that the poets saw in the natural beauty of the temple and its surroundings a source of poetic inspiration with which they could 'flatter' the god, just as in old *caṅkam* poetry *ārṟuppaṭai* poems flatter the patron by describing his country.

The six types of poetic phrase material which have been listed here are primarily held together by the *poetic* structure, and only in the second instance by any *logical* coherence. A routine poem would still be 'good', if it did not achieve much more than an interesting poetic structure (assonances, flowing rhymes and lines, sound-plays, etc.), and in relatively few cases can a total integration of the content also be detected.

[122] PTM IX, 9 is dedicated through the refrain to Tirumāliruñcōlai, but in stanza 2 Kṛṣṇa is paraphrased as 'he who is the foremost in the temple of Araṅkam'. This can be interpreted as the awareness of the plurality of Kṛṣṇa's manifestations and therefore that his oneness transcends the local concrete representations.

[123] PTM IX, 3, 2.

[124] 3rdAnt 39.

4.243 *Peculiarities of the veṇpā and tirumoḻi genres*

What has been said so far applies to all genres found in the *Prabandham*. We must turn now to some of the peculiarities which are exclusive to the *veṇpā* and *tirumoḻi* genres respectively. This can be combined with the discussion of more general points of literary analysis.

(1) *The Antâtis* In the general study of literature we can distinguish between an epic (including dramatic) and a lyric style (e.g., Homer: Sappho, Shakespeare's dramas: sonnets). All the material discussed in Part Two belongs to the epic style: Kṛṣṇa is an 'objective he' (in the myth or on the stage). The old *akam* poems take a definite step towards subjectivity by exploring the range of subjective emotions (*akam*). However, the 'epic sentiment' remained influential in that the treatment of emotions had to preserve the anonymity of the lovers.[125] The Tirumāl hymns of the *Paripāṭal*, classified after all as *puṟam*, introduce a 'we' which converses with the 'you' of Māyōṉ, and the actual names of some of the poets and composers have been preserved by tradition. With the Early Āḻvārs we move one step further in the direction of lyricism, which is then fully achieved in the *tirumoḻi* genre. In a number of *veṇpās* an 'I' expresses its religious sentiments, addresses the 'you' of Viṣṇu, and also includes 'people' in the discussion. Classical *caṅkam* poetry already knows of poetic devices which allowed the (stylized) I to express emotions in the first person. Avoiding the artificiality of a monologue, it introduces a variety of 'listeners': the friend, the ocean, the clouds, etc.[126] For more intimate statements the I could address 'the heart'.[127] Particularly this last device is employed in the *Antâtis*,[128] but with the change from a stylized

[125] As soon as reference was made to a concrete individual in a love poem, it had to be classified as *puṟam*. Thus *Puṟa*. 83-5 deals with the love of the poetess Nakkaṇai for a wrestler Kōpperuṇaṟkilli. Manickam rightly comments: 'self-expression and individual consciousness are out of place in Akattiṇai.' (p. 196)

[126] For example see Varadarajan, 1969, pp. 375-93.

[127] Examples are: *Naṟ*. 146; 312; *Akan*. 47; 303; *Kuṟu*. 63; 128, etc.

[128] In fact, the address to the heart became a typical feature of later *antâti* poems. For example, Maṇavāḷa mā muṉi, in his *Upadeśaratnamālā*, still addresses his heart when speaking about nothing more dramatic than a catalogue of books written by various Ācāryas. With Nammāḻvār this feature is employed to express a struggle in the poet's own personality.

anonymous I to the concrete, individual I of the Āḻvār. The full range of styles may be illustrated for two of the Early Āḻvārs, Poykai and Pēy, in the following Table XV.[129]

TABLE XV

(1)	objective statements about Māyōn: ('The form of the Lord who measured the world is foremost.' 1stAnt 14)	32	43
(2)	including reference to 'people' ('The minds of those who have purified their insides will easily go to his feet.' 30)	14	7
(3)	personal statements about Māyōn: ('I have placed a garland of words at the feet of the Lord.' 1)	8	19
(4)	as No. 2, but with an implied 'we/I' included ('If one checks the senses, it is easy to see him.' 50)	6	3
(5)	as No. 3, but specifically addressed to people	4	7
(6)	to the heart	13	13
(7)	to the ocean ('My good heart! I do not understand his qualities.' 45)	1	
(8)	personal statements addressed to Viṣṇu: ('I do not know how to see you.' 3)	9	3
(9)	as No. 8, but without reference to the I: ('Why did you cover up the sun?' 8)	13	5

Only about half the stanzas of these poets deal with bhakti as an objective fact; the other half contains personal elements, in that either an I is speaking about himself, or the you of Viṣṇu is directly addressed. Thus we are dealing here with an inchoate awareness and expression of 'lyrical subjectivity', of personal religious emotions. As we shall see, the later Āḻvārs will proceed much further along these lines.

Not altogether unrelated to these trends towards lyric expression is another feature of the *Antâtis*: the sheer delight in playing with

[129] Compare Tables XIX-XXI on the situation in two *Tirumoḻis*.

language and ideas—beauty as sound-harmony. By this I do not say that depth of thought is ignored or absent here; quite to the contrary, profound speculative insight is gained by means of this play with language. Two examples may illustrate this.

a makaṉ *oruvarkk' allāta mā mēṉi Māyaṉ*
b makaṉ *ām avaṉ* **c makaṉ** *raṉ kātal* — **d makaṉai**
e ciṟai *ceyta Vāṇaṉ tōḷ ceṟṟān kaḻalē*
f niṟai *ceyt' eṉ neñcē* ! **g niṉai.** (3rd Ant 92)

'My heart! Fill yourself with, and mediate upon, the feet of Māyaṉ who broke to pieces the shoulders of Bāṇa who had imprisoned the beloved son [Aniruddha] of the son [Pradyumna] of his, who was born as a son,[130] — of him with black body who is son to no one!'

The assonances **a**, **b**, and **d** are required by the *veṇpā* metre; here they stimulate a play of words with *makaṉ* 'son'. At **a** this leads to a piece of theology: Māyaṉ is eternal, without beginning, independent of anybody, absolute; he is 'son to no one'. And yet he manifested himself on earth as the son of Vasudeva and Devakī —one of the many paradoxes that amaze the Āḻvārs. Moreover, [e]*ciṟai* 'prison' is natural to the myth of Bāṇa and Aniruddha, just as [g]*niṉai* 'think!' is appropriate with 'heart'. But [f]*niṟai* 'fill' is rather strange with 'foot' as the object; it is an ingenious assonance with **e** and **f**. However, a later Āḻvār adopts it in a metrical context unconditioned by laws of assonance: *mēṉi niṟai koṇṭat' eṉ neñciṉaiyē* 'His body has filled my heart.'[131]

e kaṭainta *varuttamō? Kacci Veḵkāvil*
f kiṭant' . . . *: niṉratuvum aṅku.* (3rdAnt 64)
'Is it due to the strain of churning that he is reclining . . . in Veḵkā of Kāñcī?'

Here [e]*kaṭainta* 'churned' and [f]*kiṭantu* 'reclining' connect the myth of the churning of the milk-ocean with the serpent Vāsuki, with the posture of Nārāyaṇa's statue in the temple of Veḵkā which shows him reclining on the serpent Ananta in the ocean. This link between myth and temple is important in the bhakti of the Āḻvārs. These two examples may suffice to illustrate the inter-

[130] Kṛṣṇa is Vāsudeva, viz. son of Vasudeva, and Pradyumna is his son.
[131] Aāp 9. The phrase serves here to suggest a total absorption of the object of love and beauty in the poet's own emotions.

connection between poetic play of words and sound and theological ideas.[132]

(2) *The tirumoḻis* Only brief reference need be made here to the *refrain* as a formal feature of the strophic songs called *tirumoḻi*. It shows much greater flexibility than is found in other types of poetry; its position may vary in different stanzas, it may change its word-form from stanza to stanza, and can occur in the form of a key-word or key-phrase.

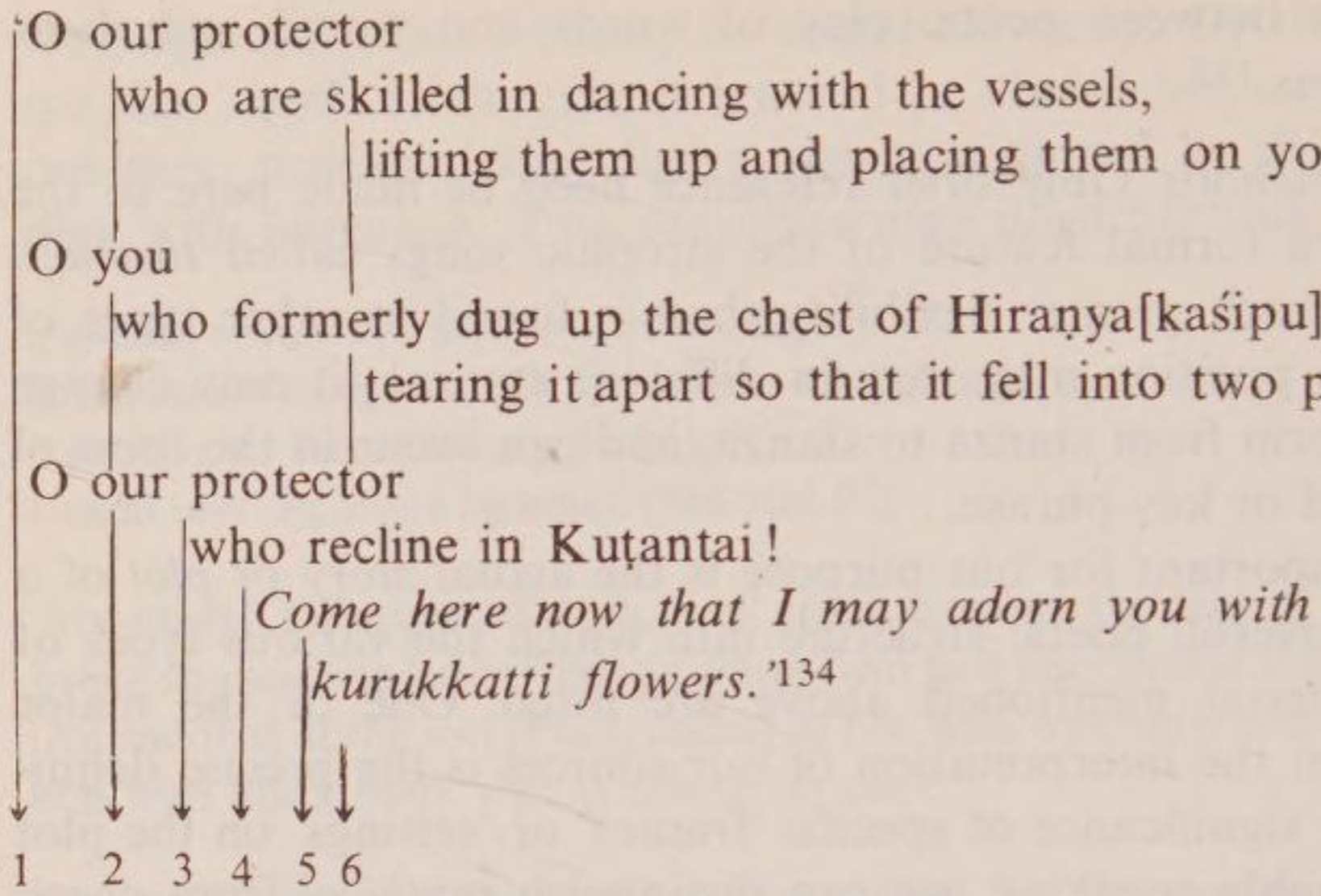
Most important for our purpose is the actual *story* or *plot* of a song, the overall poetic structure into which the various types of phrase-material mentioned above are fitted. One of the major problems in the interpretation of our sources is the precise definition of the significance of specific 'frames' or 'settings' on the plot level. Roughly speaking, we can distinguish *mythical* from *poetic* frame, and from both, poems without any conceit. In the first type of frame, a person from Kṛṣṇa mythology[133] is the main actor of the plot; in the second type, it is one of the *dramatis personae* of *caṅkam* poetics. Such 'contrived' or 'framed' poems will constitute the bulk of the source material relevant to our present study. It will suffice here to mention that such settings are used as 'carrier waves' for the emotions of bhakti, and that a special slot in the poetic structure stresses this by containing a very extensive set of 'emotional symptoms'.

(3) One *example* may give an idea of how in practice a stanza is constructed.

[132] Already in the *Paripātal* we find examples of a similar play with language; e.g.: *iṉṉōr aṉaiyai*^{y} *iṉaiyai*^{y} *āl eṉa aṉṉōr . . . niṉṉ' ōr' aṉaiyai niṉ . .* (I, 50f.54) '(since we do not see here) a being of the same nature, for us to say that you are like this, you are like those, you are comparable only to yourself, [radiant with] your own [splendour].'

The *veṇpā* metre and the *antâti* form are older than the Āḻvārs (and Nāyaṉārs); compare some of the works mentioned Zvelebil 1975, pp. 117-23. But they do not seem to go back further than the fourth or fifth century AD.

[133] Figures from Rāma mythology are found only four times; other *avatāras* and their myths never occur on the plot-level of a poem or song.


'O our protector
who are skilled in dancing with the vessels,
lifting them up and placing them on your head!
O you
who formerly dug up the chest of Hiraṇya[kaśipu]
tearing it apart so that it fell into two parts!
O our protector
who recline in Kuṭantai!
Come here now that I may adorn you with
kurukkatti flowers.'134
1 2 3 4 5 6

We can analyse the stanza in the following manner. It belongs to a *tirumoḻi* with a mythical frame: Yaśodā addresses her son Kṛṣṇa. The plot-level coincides with the *refrain* (the phrase in italics (4) which is here fixed in its position and word-form except for a slot (5) into which different flower-names are inserted) and the vocatives. The remaining elements in the poetic structure are a *theological title* (1) —possibly pregnant: though a baby that has to be protected by magical flowers, he is Kṛṣṇa the universal Protector; two *mythological references* (2), the first to Nṛsiṃha, specified as 'formerly' and the second to the obscure *kuṭakkūttu*.[135] Then we have a *temple reference* (3), which suggests the bhakti undercurrents of 'adorning with flowers'. Finally, we have two pieces of *ornamentation* (6), which have no other function than to depict the two mythical incidents more vividly.

The stanza is a good example of a primarily functional integration of the various poetic factors, with only a vague logical coherence, but an elaborate play on sounds. In terms of our present study we would have to interpret the poem primarily as an example of the sheer enjoyment involved in singing or listening to a poetically perfect bhakti poem. However, there are many poems in which material relevant for a study of emotional bhakti appears directly in the 'plot', viz. where the content of the poem exemplifies it.

[134] *Kuṭaṅkaḷ eṭutt ēr̲a*^{v} *iṭṭu kkūtt' āṭa valla! eṅ kōvē! itaṇṭ' iṭṭ' Iraṇiyaṉ neñcai*^{y} *iru piḷa*^{v} *āka muṉ kīṇṭāy! Kuṭantai kkiṭanta*^{v} *en kōvē! kurukkatti ppū ccūṭṭa vārāy!* (PâlTM II, 7, 7, lines a/c/d; note the sound-play, particularly of k, t, and ṭ.)

[135] On the *kuṭakkūttu* see 3.524 with note 206.

4.3 Emotional bhakti in the Prabandham[1]

4.31 The Early Āḻvārs and their Tiruvantâtis

4.311 *General remarks*

The four *Tiruvantâtis* constitute the oldest stage of religion represented in the *Prabandham*; superficially it would seem that this material is very similar to the Tirumāl hymns in the *Paripāṭal* —which indeed are the closest parallels to the *Antâtis* found in the Tamil tradition. However, a closer look reveals that besides the difference of provenance there is also a difference in the religious content of these works. The *Antâtis* show features not found in the *Paripāṭal* but of the greatest importance with later Āḻvārs; thus

[1] The study of the *Prabandham* which is presented in the following pages has almost exclusively been based on the analysis of the poems themselves. Secondary literature, although not scarce, is on the whole of a derivative or devotional nature and therefore of very limited usefulness for critical purposes. But in order to complete our bibliography, I list here all the works known to me and read in the course of my study (excluding works in Tamil). Zvelebil, 1975, pp. 152-62 provides an extensive bibliography; further literature has been mentioned under 1.5 (pp. 41ff), 4.23 note 69, and 4.351 note 4. To these may be added the following. Gonda, 1963, pp. 127-31; J. Filliozat, 'La dévotion Vishnouite au pays Tamouls', in *Serie Orientale Roma*, vii, Conferenze, pp. 81-109, Rome, 1955; K.V. Soundara Rajan, 'Divya-Prabandham of Alvars as socio-cultural source', in *Inst. of Indian History*, vol. 41, part I, pp. 177-90. A useful reference work is *Nālāyirativyappirapanta-Akarāti*, An Encyclopaedic Lexicon and Concordance, Śrīrangam, 1963, which although being far from a complete concordance, lists many of the more difficult words with their traditional interpretation by the commentaries.

Of the mainly devotional works may be mentioned: D. Ramaswamy Ayyangar, *Peeps into Mysticism*, Madras[2], 1967; Swami Shuddhananda Bharati, *Alvar Saints—Their Lives and Teachings*, Ramachandrapuram, 1942; a series of articles by K.C. Varadachari: 'Śrī Kulaśekhara's philosophy of devotion' and 'The philosophy of religion of the Alvars' in *Journal of Śrī Veṅkaṭeśvara Oriental Institute*, Tirupati, vol. III, 1942, pp. 1–22 and 153–90 respectively; 'Psychology of freedom and religious consciousness in Kulaśekhara's philosophy of devotion', in *New Indian Antiquary*, vol. 5 (1942/3) pp. 210-2: 'Some contributions of Alvars to the philosophy of bhakti', in *Annals of the Bhandarkar Oriental Research Institute*, Poona, vol. 23, 1942, pp. 621-32. S. Michael Irudayam, 'Treatment of nature in Thiruvaymozhi', originally a paper presented at the II International Conference of Tamil Studies, reprinted Madras, 1968.

Parts of the *Prabandham* have been translated into Sanskrit, Kanarese, Hindi, and Telugu, particularly the TVM = 'Sahasragīti': some of these are published by P.B. Aṇṇaṅkarācāriyar in Kāñcīpuram.

these four works can be considered to be the foundation of the Āḻvār religion.

The four *Antâtis* do not easily yield to an analysis in terms of the present study. The connection between the individual stanzas is not logical, but purely formal (the *antâti* concatenation); clarity of thought is considerably reduced through virtuosity of language and metrical requirements; and only with difficulty can nuances and differences be recognized behind the seeming similarity of all four works.[2] They constitute the earliest documents of Āḻvār religion, but although it appears safe to assume the *Gītā* to be the ultimate source of their bhakti, we have no clues about the intermediate history of influence.

But we are not aiming at a comprehensive analysis of the *Antâtis*. Concerning the limited topic we are discussing, emotionalism, these works demonstrate a very inchoate stage in the development. Moreover, we can treat the four *Antâtis* as one *corpus*, without trying to differentiate nuances for the individual four poets.

The poetic structure of the *veṇpās* allows us to infer the basic categories of bhakti as expressed in the *Antâtis*. I propose to construct my analysis according to this pattern. From a stanza like the following[3] we can derive four basic topics:

> The young cowherd who broke the *kuruntu* tree (= myth, 2) has taken his abode in the milk-ocean and the cool heavens (= absolute, 1), in Vēṅkaṭam (= temple, 3), and in the minds of those who have destroyed all the fruits of their actions (=mysticism, 4).

The emphasis will naturally be on the fourth topic, and the other three will be discussed only briefly. I shall then compare the structure of bhakti as found here with those of the Tirumāl hymns in the *Paripāṭal* and of the allegedly first Śaivite bhakti poet, Kāraikkāl Ammai. A special form of theistic yoga, combined with temple worship, appears from our analysis as the characteristic of the bhakti in the *Antâtis*.

[2] Thus one could say that Pēy-Āḻvār is the most mystical among the four: he places great stress on Kṛṣṇa's beauty and on seeing it. Tirumaḻicai is concerned with Kṛṣṇa's superiority over Śiva.

[3] 3rd Ant 32.

4.312 *Kṛṣṇaism in the* Antâtis

(1) *The absolute god* Already in our analysis of the *caṅkam* sources, the identity of *Māyōṉ* presented a certain difficulty.[4] But in the Early Āḻvārs, the situation is more complicated, since here Māyōṉ's identity has to be established from a wider context. There are still indications of a more composite conception, something like the Hari-Hara figure or the *trimūrti* Brahmā—Viṣṇu—Śiva, with which these Āḻvārs struggled and from which they broke away in favour of the conception of Māyōṉ as the sole absolute in the strict sense. Traces of the older situations are e.g. in Poykai:

> The name is Araṉ (= Hara), Nāraṇaṉ (= Nārāyaṇa); the vehicle is the bull, the bird. . .; the form is fire– and cloud-body: [they are] one.[5]
>
> Though Śiva and Neṭumāl may ever move in two bodies, one is always in the body of [the other] one.[6]

Pēy says:

> Our Father on the Sacred Mountain (Vēṅkaṭam), although he has two forms—dangling matted locks and a tall crown. . .—joins together as one.[7]

Such stanzas by no means represent an attempt to arrive at the conception of an absolute transcending both Viṣṇu and Śiva,[8] for in much more numerous stanzas Māl's superiority over Śiva is stressed. E.g., 'Nārāyaṇa created (Brahmā) who . . . created Caṅkaraṉ. . .'[9] 'The Bhaṭṭās of Civa are vile; . . . they do not praise Mātavaṉ. . .'[10] '(Śiva) with the river in his locks is incapable of praising (Māl).'[11] Incidentally, in Kāraikkāl Ammaiyār, from

[4] See above, 3.711.

[5] Stanza 5: *Araṉ Nāraṇaṉ nāmam, āṉ viṭai puḷḷ ūrti . . . uruvam eri karu mēṉiy orru.*

[6] Stanza 98: *Puṇṇiyaṉum . . Neṭumālum enrum iruvar aṅkattāl tirivarēlum, oruvaṉ oruvaṉ aṅkatt' enrum uḷaṉ.* Compare 74: *ērṟāṉ puḷḷ ūrntāṉ . . . kāppu*, which the commentators explain as: 'He who rides on the bird (= Māl) is the protection for Him with the bull'. Compare also Pūtattu 60 or Poykai 28.

[7] Stanza 63: *tiru malai mēl Entaikku iraṇṭ' uruvum onr' āy icaintu.*

[8] We must take into account here also the iconographic situation. Some of the archaic *mūla-vigrahas* in the shrines must have been iconographically so undefined that arguments about a 'Vaiṣṇava' or 'Śaiva' identity of the figure could arise. On such arguments concerning Tirumāliruñcōlai see Gros 1968, pp. lviff, and on Vēṅkaṭam see Krishnaswami Aiyangar 1940, vol. 1, pp. 59-83 *passim* and pp. 87-95.

[9] 4thAnt 1.

[10] Ibid., 6.

[11] Ibid., 10. Tirumaḻicai refers to Śiva (and Māl's superiority over him) in: 1, 4, 6, 8ff, 15, 17, 26, 31, 42f, 54f, 58, 66, 73, 75, 78, 82, 84, 87, 91, 96.

the same composite figure, Śiva is developed as the absolute.[12]

Thus both the Śaivite poetess and the Early Āḻvārs start from a situation which we have not encountered in the *caṅkam corpus* and which therefore may be assumed to be of Sanskritic origin. They clearly propagate a religious polarization 'Vaiṣṇavism' versus 'Śaivism'.[13] On the other hand, the 'flight of fancy' (see 3.74)[14] may be recalled here; accordingly it is not surprising to find in the *Antâtis* quite a different tendency, too. Māl who still remains more a 'distant' than a 'close' God, is nevertheless spoken of with attributes that are typical of Murukaṉ,[15] and he has become a god of beauty and love.

However, for the Early Āḻvārs Māl is the absolute god—whether fused with Śiva (in earlier strata) or visualized in terms of Murukaṉ —but not the impersonal *brahman*; he is residing in Vaikuntam,[16] in 'the perfect great town,'[17] in 'the eternal place,'[18] and in 'the country of the world above'[19]—the goal of all the *bhakta*'s aspirations.

(2) *Mythical manifestations* Māl, 'the son to no one' manifests himself 'as son'—the absolute transcendental God appears on earth, in the context of space and history; such manifestations represent Kṛṣṇa's *māyam* or *māyai*,[20] and this is perhaps the most

[12] In the ATAnt, stanzas 41, 52, and 53 mention the 'Hari-Hara' conception: 'becoming on one side Māl who measured the world' (*oru pāl ulak' aḷanta Māl avaṉ ām*); '(Śiva) who has sacred Māl of red eyes as his portion' (*ceṅ kaṇ tiru Mālai ppaṅk' uṭaiyāṉ*); '(Māl) who is a portion of you' (*niṉṉ uṭaiya pākattāṉ*); compare 59 and 83. Other stanzas, like 18f, 80, etc. make it clear that Śiva transcends Hari: 'my lord (Śiva) who transcends Hari' (*Ariya paraṉ eṉ kō*, 18).

[13] It is very difficult to relate the other polarity Māyōṉ: Murukaṉ to this; perhaps one could argue that since Viṣṇu related organically to Māyōṉ, the Śaivites had to align themselves with Murukaṉ as son of Śiva and Koṟṟavai ~ Durgā.

[14] I suggested that due to the polarization of Southern religion, the 'Vaiṣṇavas' were left with a 'blank' where once the 'close and human' god Murukaṉ figured.

[15] 3rdAnt 61, 72; 4thAnt 44: *iḷaṅ kumaraṉ* 'the young prince'—note Murukan's Skt. name Kumāra. 3rdAnt 25: Cēyāṉ 'person of ruddy complexion; youth; leader, lord; *Skanda* (=Murukaṉ)'.

[16] 4thAnt 19.

[17] 3rdAnt 51: *kalaṅkā peru nakaram*.

[18] 4thAnt 73: *paṇṭai ttāṉa-*.

[19] 4thAnt 95: *mēlaiy iṭa nāṭu*.

[20] Both < Skt. *māyā: māyam* 1stAnt 7 etc., *māyai* 4thAnt 76, etc. Compare *Cila*. 17, 13]. The word is used in its older meaning: 'miracle, wonder, trick, unpredictability, etc.' In this sense we find it used with Kṛṣṇa already in BhG 7, 14f

important single term that describes the modality of how the Āḻvārs experience Māyōṉ. For the Early Āḻvārs, Kṛṣṇa's mythical appearances and his activities during them are full of wonder, transcend logical comprehension, cause amazement and awe. Frequently they address Kṛṣṇa and ask him what it all means and how the contradictory features found in different myths can be reconciled with each other:

> [People] relate that you took on the form of a baby, ate the seven worlds, and slept that day on the leaf of a banyan tree.
>
> Speak: Was the banyan that day in the water of the ocean, or in heaven, or on earth?[21]

The question here is: if you absorbed the whole universe, how could there be a banyan?

Or another example of Kṛṣṇa's *māyā*:

> Pirān who sucked [the life out] of the ogress (Pūtanā) with saw-like teeth, . . . retreated because of the churning stick the cowherd woman (Yaśodā) was holding![22]

As mentioned above, the god's name itself was given a pregnant interpretation; e.g.:

> Though [people] will call him now 'full of *māyam*' (Māyaṉ) and though he may be impossible to see henceforth, He-who-is-sweet is inside [my] soul.[23]

Thus Kṛṣṇa's *māyā* not only transcends any logical comprehension, but it also obscures for the devotees the very experience of him, the 'sight', and this can be connected with the 'longing to see' Kṛṣṇa, one of the most important features of Āḻvār bhakti. At the same time, Kṛṣṇa's mythical deeds contain *māyā* as fascinating beauty: 'Indeed it is (Māyōṉ's) beauty to step across the

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'uncanny power' (Zaehner, 1969, pp. 249f, comp. 182-4). See also Hacker, 1965, p. 148 on traces of this meaning in Śaṅkara (see 5.234 below). A good example of *māyam* is the seeming contradiction of 'son to nobody' and 'son of Vasudeva' in 3rdAnt 92.

[21] 1stAnt 69. The myth is related in the MBh III, 188 (=SØrensen § 429) by Mārkaṇḍeya.

[22] 3rdAnt 27. Compare *Cila*. 17, 13], Appendix X.

[23] Ibid., 83: *iṉiʸ avaṉ Māyaṉ eṉaᵛ uraipparēlum, iṉiʸ avaṉ kāṇp ariyaṉ-ēlum, iṉiyavaṉ* [*the comm. have again iṉiʸ avaṉ*] . . *uḷḷattiṉ uḷḷēʸ uḷaṉ*.

cosmos. . .'[24] We have here the second major feature of Āḻvār bhakti: to relish Kṛṣṇa's beauty.

An analysis of the mythology which is alluded to in the *Antâtis* reveals certain interesting features. A rough count of the mythological reference in these four poems yields the following information which is summarized in Table XVI.

TABLE XVI

	total	1st	2nd	3rd	4th
myths generally associated with Viṣṇu (baby on banyan leaf, churning of milk-ocean, release of Gajendra, etc.)	73	19	15	24	15
myths associated with the '*avatāras*'[25]:	255	81	55	79	40
Matsya	1				1
Kūrma	2			1	1
Varāha	14	7	3	2	2
Rāma[26]	20	5	7	2	6
Nṛsiṃha	23	9	5	5	4
Vāmana	66	16	19	23	8
	126	37	34	33	22
Kṛṣṇa	129	44	21	46	18
youth in Vraja[27]	94	35	17	34	8
erotic episodes[28]	20	7	3	7	3
others, like MBh[29]	15	2	1	5	7
Kṛṣṇa: *avatāras*	50%	54%	38%	58%	45%
erotic: Kṛṣṇa		16%	14%	15%	17%
erotic: *avatāras*		8,7%	5,5%	9%	7,5%
Viṣṇu: total (328)	22%				

[24] Ibid., 6: *aḻak' anṟēy aṇṭam kaṭattal.*

[25] The range found here appears to correspond to that of religion in the Gupta empire; see Goetz, 1964, p. 104.

[26] He is clearly not yet an important figure in Southern religion. Episodes are, *inter alia*, the golden deer, seven trees, blocking the ocean, killing of Rāvaṇa.

[27] The following episodes are mentioned: he became a cowherd boy and grazed cows, was breast-fed by Yaśodā, kicked the cart, Pūtanā, Kāliya, stole the butter,

The general Viṣṇu myths constitute a mere 22% of the total; quite clearly his 'manifestations' are far more important for the Early Āḻvārs. But out of the classical ten, only seven are represented at all, and among these only Vāmana and Kṛṣṇa are really significant. However, the emphasis is on Kṛṣṇa mythology (50 per cent of all references to the *avatāras*, and *c.* 40 per cent of the total). Thus we are dealing here not with a general 'Viṣṇuism' but specifically with Kṛṣṇaism. With one exception[30], it is on the whole the Kṛṣṇa figure connected with Vraja which is prominent. Furthermore, around 15 per cent of the Vraja episodes involve the *gopīs* in some form; this is surely an emphasis for which we have no parallel (other than Hāla) in the Northern sources. In fact, the particular myths which are mentioned here are typically Southern, viz. those which presuppose an earlier development in the South.[31] However, when we compare their importance here with the emphasis found in folk Kṛṣṇaism (as reconstructed from works of the Tamil renaissance), we see that the eroticism is much more subdued, although not altogether suppressed as in the Tirumāl hymns of the *Paripāṭal*[32]. There is no evidence which would suggest that the Early Āḻvārs were familiar with further Northern sources, in addition to those which were postulated for the *caṅkam* references to Māyōṉ and the *gopīs*. As we shall see,[33] the Major Āḻvārs will emphasize the erotic *gopī* episodes much more strongly,

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was tied to a mortar and broke the pair of trees, Keśī, Baka, calf (<Dhenuka), Indra festival and Govardhana; Kuvalayapīḍa, wrestlers, killing of Kaṃsa, and liberating his parents.

[28] He played the flute: 3rdAnt 42.89: broke the *kuruntu* tree: 1stAnt 27.54.62, 3rdAnt 32, 4thAnt 57; defeated one/seven bull(s) for the sake of Piṉṉai: 1stAnt 62P. 83, 2ndAnt 67P. 68, 3rdAnt 25.49P.85P, 4thAnt 23.32P; danced the *kuravai*: 1stAnt 54; danced with the vessels (taken as 'erotic' here because of CTMaṭ): 1stAnt 54, 2ndAnt 98, 3rdAnt 73. Note also 4thAnt 56.82 in which Māyōn is characterized as 'father of Kāma' (= Pradyumna).

[29] Only the 4thAnt 71 alludes to his speaking the *Gītā*: *Māyaṉ aṉṟ' ōtiya vākku* 'the words which Māyaṉ that day recited'; the commentator Aṇṇa. specifies these words as the *caramaśloka*, BhG XVI, 66.

[30] The 4thAnt shows a more proportionate distribution of themes associated with various 'Kṛṣṇa figures'.

[31] See 3.562.

[32] There we found no more than the elusive reference to the *kuravai* (and dance with the vessels) in three words (III, 83); see 3.62.

[33] See below 4.442, particularly (2); also 4.353, p.

but on the whole from models other than the erotic myths mentioned here.

One final observation must be made: no stanza in the four *Antâtis* deals with a mythical episode on the 'plot level', it is only in 'mythical allusions', or in the subjective reflections of the Āḻvār, that such references are made. As we shall see, later Āḻvārs show the same attitude (except that the *kuruntu* figures once as the 'plot'), which can be explained from this situation found in the *Antâtis*. Nowhere do we find a poem of mythical 'frame' dealing with Pinnai, the bullfight, or the *kuravai* (or the *rāsa* for that matter).

(3) *The temple and external bhakti* On the whole the stanzas in the *Antâtis* are terse and compact, yet surprisingly, when referring to Vēṅkaṭam, the Early Āḻvārs become prolific and verbose. For example:

> The town of Him with the fine sapphire's colour is Vēṅkaṭam that has murderous lions, gold, jewels, and pearls, trees in bloom and groves, where many gems float down on the water,[34] monkeys, and people of the hunter tribes.[35]

These groups of stanzas show that the temple of Vēṅkaṭam is not just the geographical, but also the spiritual *locale* where the Early Āḻvārs' life takes place. The temple (in the generic sense) is the concrete centre of their religion.

Turning now to the phraseology employed which refers to the forms in which this temple-religion expresses itself, we notice a considerable similarity with the terms found already in the *Paripāṭal*. Again we may distinguish 'worship' and 'praise'. Denoting 'worship' we find:

taḻu-[36] 'to worship, adore, pay homage to', to which frequently *kai* '(with) the hands' is added.[37]
paṇi-[38] 'to be humble, submissive, to bow, make obeisance to'.
aṇi-[39] 'to adorn, make beautiful'.

[34] Presumably precious stones that are washed loose and carried down by the waterfalls.

[35] 4thAnt 47. The other stanzas are: 1stAnt 37-40; 2ndAnt 25-7; 3rdAnt 68-73; 4thAnt 39-48.

[36] E.g., 1stAnt 11f, 16, 65; 2ndAnt 11.43; 3rdAnt 7f, 24f, 35, 53, 88.

[37] E.g., 1stAnt 65; 3rdAnt 8, 35; 2ndAnt 47, etc.

[38] E.g., 2ndAnt 31, 33, 37, 65; 4thAnt 22, etc.

[39] E.g., 2ndAnt 47, 65; 4thAnt 43, etc.

Mūla- and *utsava-vigrahas* in the Kavittalam temple.

Most frequently, 'feet' figures as the object of these three verbs: *kaḻal toḻu-* (3rdAnt 35 . . .), lit. 'anklet'; *pātam aṇi-* (2ndAnt 47 . . .); *cēv aṭi aṇi-* (2ndAnt 65 . . .) 'red feet'[40]; *tāḷ paṇi-* (4thAnt 22 . . .) lit. 'leg'.

We also have *tiru mēṉi paṇi-* (2ndAnt 65) 'to bow to his sacred body'. *vaṇaṅku-*[41] 'bow down, serve; worship'.

It should be clear that the phraseology refers to ritual acts performed before the temple image of Kṛṣṇa.[42] Also in view of the utensils that are mentioned as employed in 'worshipping his feet' there cannot be any doubt about this. We find the following list:

flowers: *malar*,[43] *pū*,[44] *pōtu*,[45] *kamalam* (lotus).[46] The verbs used here are: *tūy-* 'to scatter', 3rdAnt 19; *aṇi-* 'to adorn with', 2ndAnt 47.65; *paṇi-* 'to bow down with' 2ndAnt 31; *iṭu-* 'to place upon', 4thAnt 15.42.

incense: *pukai*[47]
lamps: *viḷakku*[48], *tī*[49]
holy water: *puṉal*[50]

A typical sentence is: 'With my hands I have placed fresh lotuses on your red feet as ornaments.'[51]

From the word *aṭi* 'foot', Tamil derives *aṭi-mai* 'service' or 'servant', and *aṭi-yēṉ* etc. 'I (etc.) who am your servant'. The ritual acts of worship thus enact a basic relationship between Kṛṣṇa and his 'servant'—in fact that of 'bhakti' in the old sense of 'loyalty, devotedness'. When the Early Āḻvārs refer to their 'servitude', they may well mean a further aspect, viz. of 'professional/hereditary temple service'. Thus we hear: 'I have become your servant',[52] 'I have become his servant',[53] 'to become servant to

[40] 'Red' probably because smeared with *kuṅkuma* powder.
[41] E.g., 2ndAnt 12; 4thAnt 42, etc.
[42] See above 3.65 on the literal or concrete significance of the terms, *ad Paripāṭal*.
[43] 2ndAnt 6, 22, 34, 47; 3rdAnt 19; 4thAnt 15.
[44] 1stAnt 37; 2ndAnt 10.
[45] 2ndAnt 31.
[46] 4thAnt 42; 2ndAnt 65.
[47] 1stAnt 37; 2ndAnt 34.
[48] 2ndAnt 1.
[49] 1stAnt 37.
[50] 1stAnt 37.
[51] 2ndAnt 65: *paiṅ kamalam kaiyāl aṇintēṉ uṉ cēv aṭi mēl.*
[52] Ibid., 34: *aṭimai paṭṭēṉ uṉakku.*
[53] 3rdAnt 37: *avaṟk' aṭimai paṭṭēṉ.*

him',[54] 'I have obtained [the state of] servitude'.[55]

But just as the acts of worship and 'submission' express Kṛṣṇa's lordship, to place lotuses 'as adornment' or to burn incense manifests ritually Kṛṣṇa's beauty—by 'beautifying' his image the devotee himself ritually enjoys a sensuous beauty which symbolizes Kṛṣṇa's.

For the second complex, that of 'praise', we find the following phraseology:

ēttu-[56]	'to praise, extol'
ōtu-[57]	'to recite, recite the Vedas, utter *mantras*, repeat prayers, sing'
vāl̲ttu-[58]	'to praise'
paravu-[59]	'to pray, praise'.

By far the most common object of 'praise' is styled 'name' (*pēr*,[60] *nāmam*[61]); in a few cases also 'foot'.[62] In 2ndAnt 39 it is said that to recite Kṛṣṇa's 'names' is a 'short cut' for the *Vedas*.

pāṭu- 'to sing': (a) in a general sense, not connected necessarily with the temple,[63] as expression of bhakti: 'Going all over the country and listening to the singing and dancing. . .'[64] (b) With the temple as object: 'Sing about Vēṅkaṭam!'[65] (c) As formalized art music connected with temple-worship:[66] 'We worship his feet with our hands, and sing in *pāṇ* (~rāgas).'[67]

Thus we find here that with the temple ritual as its centre, bhakti involves sensuous beauty (flowers, incense, the beautiful *vigraha*), and even the somewhat restrictive 'praise' acquires a more emotional character through the singing, dancing, and music.

(4) *Māyōn̲ in the heart: internal bhakti* The temple is not the only

[54] 2ndAnt 16: *tan̲akk' aṭimai paṭṭatu.*

[55] 4thAnt 95: *aṭimai ēn̲rēn̲.*

[56] E.g., 1stAnt 25.64; 2ndAnt 10, 12, 20, 34, 37, 57; 4thAnt 6, 15, 31, 42, 85, etc.

[57] E.g., 1stAnt 13; 2ndAnt 5f, 11, 14, 38f, 44; 3rdAnt 10, etc.

[58] E.g., 1stAnt 11; 2ndAnt 57; 3rdAnt 95; 4thAnt 15, etc.

[59] E.g., 1stAnt 13.

[60] E.g., 2ndAnt 57: *pēr ēttu-*, 14: *pēr ōtu-*, 6: *pēr ōtiy ēttu-*.

[61] E.g., 4thAnt 85: *nāmam ēttu-*, 49: *tiru nāmam kūṟu-*. In 2ndAnt 2 and 44, both *pēr* and *nāmam* occur: the latter may denote here the more technical 'reciting the *Viṣṇusahasranāmam*' (compare 1stAnt 65; 2ndAnt 73.77).

[62] 2ndAnt 37: *nin pātaṅkaḷ ēttu-* 'to praise your feet'; even more idiomatic is the phrase (*ibid.* 57) *pātam pēr ēttu-* 'to praise the names of your feet'.

[63] As also the songs of the *Aycci* or of the *kuravai* in the *Kali*.

[64] 4thAnt 80: *paran̲t' ulakam pāṭina āṭina kēṭṭu*: compare 2ndAnt 32: *pāṭiy āṭum*.

[65] 3rdAnt 69: *Vēṅkaṭam pāṭum*. After all, this is what the Āl̲vārs themselves do: see 4.21, note 5, above.

[66] This was found already in *Perump.* 390-2.

[67] 3rdAnt 35: *pāṇ kāṭ. . . kal̲al pāṭi yām tol̲utum kai.*

context in which the Early Āḻvārs encounter Māyōṉ; as Pēy says:

> The young cowherd has taken as his abode the minds of those who have withdrawn [their attention] into the lotus with fine petals.[68]

That means, the *yogins* unearth or realize through their meditation Māyōṉ within themselves, in their 'minds' (*maṉam*). We can connect this with the *bhakti-yoga* of the *Bhagavadgītā*:[69] to perform the traditional *yoga* exercises ('withdrawing the senses', etc.) in total surrender to Kṛṣṇa 'who abides in those who commune with him in love's devotion'.[70] There are other examples of this type of *yoga*, particularly in the first two *Antâtis*. 'Who has placed fierce guards at the door of the five senses'[71]—compare in the *Gītā* 'closing up all [the body's] gates'[72]—'will come to know him who is there, himself being the open gate.'[73] The *yoga* exercises block the contact of the senses with their objects—the doors of the body to the outside world—and the mental processes are redirected towards the *ātman* (or, in classical Yoga, the *buddhi*); there Kṛṣṇa, like an open gate, is easily available. The following stanza similarly combines traditional *yoga* ideas with Kṛṣṇa bhakti and the mythical realm of Viṣṇu:

> Those who harness[74] in their bosoms the five senses and their objects, so that they cannot stir—the senses which are never satisfied—, will see with unwinking eyes,[75] while darkness recedes, and they will reach the town of him who reclines on the serpent with thousand mouths.[76]

[68] 3rdAnt 32: *nuṇ ṇūla tāmarai mēl pār paṭṭ' iruntār maṉamum iṭam āka kkoṇṭāṉ . . . kōpālakaṉ*. The 'lotus' here is the heart: compare, for example, BhG VIII, 12: *mano hṛdi nirudhya* 'stem his mind within the heart', which Rāmānuja explains as 'I who have entered the lotus of [your] heart'. The comm. Aṇṇa. (*ad* 3rdAnt 32) makes it clear that we are dealing here with *yoga*: 'the heart of the *yogins* who are absorbed in *yoga*'.

[69] See above 1.424. Particularly BhG II, 54-72 and VI, 10-32 provide the details of the theistic *yoga* techniques.

[70] Trans. Zaehner; BhG IX, 29: *ye bhajanti tu māṃ bhaktyā . . . teṣu . . . aham.*

[71] IstAnt 4: *aintu pori vācal pōr kkatavam cātti.*

[72] BhG VIII, 12: *sarva-dvārāṇi saṃyamya.*

[73] *Neṟi vācal tāṉēyāy niṉṟāṉai . . . aṟivāṉ*. Compare BhG VIII, 14: *ananya-cetāḥ satataṃ yo māṃ smarati nityaśaḥ tasyâhaṃ sulabhaḥ* 'how easily am I won by him who bears Me in mind unceasingly, thinking of nothing else' (Zaehner).

[74] *Aṇai-ttal* 'to harness (a beast)' is the direct semantic correspondent to Skt. *yuj->yoga.*

[75] This is metaphorical for 'divine', since the gods do not wink: compare BhG XI, 8: *divyaṃ cakṣuḥ* 'divine eye'.

[76] IstAnt 32: *imaiyāta kaṇṇāl iruḷ akala nōkki amaiyā ppoṟi pulaṉkaḷ aintum namaiyāmal ākatt' aṇaippār aṇaivarē āyira vāy nākatt' aṇaiyāṉ nakar.*

The control of the senses and the redirecting of the mental faculties lead to a perfected power of perception,[77] but the ultimate object to be perceived is not just the truth of one's liberation, but Nārāyaṇa in his eternal and yet concrete form of existence.

The actual *locus* where Kṛṣṇa abides and is realized is styled variously; most frequent are *maṉam*,[78] *cintai*[79], *neñcu/neñcam*,[80] and *uḷḷam*.[81] The denotations seem to flow into each other, and together they demarcate an area which we would describe as 'soul, intellect, mind, consciousness, self'. I have not attempted here to disentangle the very complex question of how precisely (or whether at all) these terms can be correlated to what are historically three different conceptions. Viṣṇu's immanent presence in the soul as *antaryāmī*, Viṣṇu as the object of the *buddhi*'s or *ātman*'s liberating perception, and the *manas* as coordinating organ for the five types of sense impressions.

The process of realizing Māyōṉ in the heart is referred to by verbs like *uḷ-*,[82] *ōr-*,[83] *niṉai-*,[84] all meaning 'to think, meditate, ponder'. Again, it is impossible to decide in each case whether 'yoga' is referred to in its technical sense, and thus I have treated these words indiscriminately as pointers towards (intellectual) bhakti.

It would appear from the quotation at the beginning of this section—'Kṛṣṇa abides in those who meditate on him'—that intellectual bhakti is the *condition* for his presence. Thus we hear

[77] On this see Frauwallner, 1953, p. 433: '*Diese Beherrschung des Geistes und die damit verbundene Klarsicht kann nun der Yogī auf die verschiedensten Gegenstände richten.*' Compare pp. 437f.

[78] E.g., 2ndAnt 16.28; 3rdAnt 3; < Skt. *manas*.

[79] E.g., 3rdAnt 26.30.32; < Skt. *cintā*.

[80] E.g., 3rdAnt 94; 4thAnt 58.66.85; literally 'heart'.

[81] Literally 'inside', thus possibly - *ātman*. But it does not seem to correspond directly to any Skt. technical term; *Kuṟaḷ* 282 uses it as *manas* 'mind', *Maṇimēkalai* 30,87 as the Buddhist *vijñāna*, and *Civañāṉapōtam* 5, 1, 1 as *āṉmā* 'individual self'.

[82] E.g., 3rdAnt 40; 4thAnt 86. The root *uḷ* means 'inside'; thus the verb derived from it literally 'to interiorize', and as the activity typical of the *uḷḷam* (see note 81), 'to think, cherish, feel'. See DED 600.

[83] E.g., 2ndAnt 7.

[84] E.g., 2ndAnt 41. Allusion to such 'intellectual' concentration on Māl is made, e.g., 1stAnt 6, 30, 33, 41, 99f; 2ndAnt 40ff, 44, 55; 3rdAnt 12; 4thAnt 34. This includes negative expressions like 'never to forget, never to put out of one's mind' with verbs like *maṟa-* or *veṟu*.

indeed: 'he is inside those who meditate on him',[85] 'those who meditate properly will see his beauty'.[86] But on the other hand we are told that 'constantly thinking of him' is the *result* of experiencing him: 'Having placed Māl into my heart, I shall never put his being there out of my mind.'[87] But ultimately the poems express the awareness that Māyōṉ's abiding in the soul is an act of free, undeserved grace.

> Even if one does not know that service [to him] is appropriate for oneself, it is possible to offer Māl an opportunity to come into one's mind—[for] who could force rain to fall on dry forest land? [Yet] one can make an effort by [at least constructing] an irrigation tank.[88]

In the final analysis however, Māyōṉ cannot be said *not* to be inside the soul; for everything, including man's own being and existence, depends upon his grace and his inner presence as the *antaryāmī*. 'Your grace sets things into being and maintains them'[89]; it is Māyōṉ's 'eternal nature to be there and think [of the world]'[90]; the Āḻvār can regard him as his 'refuge'[91] and 'support'[92] and as his 'meaning'.[93] He can approach him 'like a calf looking for its mother',[94] and sees him as his 'bliss and nectar'.[95]

We could conclude from these statements that Māyōṉ's presence in the heart of his *bhaktas* is a 'special' case of his omnipresent immanence; that through *bhakti-yoga* this presence can be unearthed and brought into the full consciousness of the *bhakta*.

[85] 4thAnt 86: *uḷḷuvār uḷḷatt' uḷaṉ*.

[86] 3rdAnt 12: *naṉk' uṇarvār kāṇparē . . . paṭi*. But *paṭi* is also 'nature'.

[87] 4thAnt 92: *eṉ ṉeñcattē vaittu niṉṟum iruntum neṭu Mālai eṉṟum maṟant' aṟiyēṉ*. Compare note 129 below; also here the literal translation would read: '. . .how he is standing and sitting. . .' 1stAnt 6 says similarly *ōta nīr vaṇṇaṉai nāṉ iṉṟu maṟappaṉō*? 'shall I hereafter forget about him who has the ocean's colour?'

[88] 2ndAnt 16: *taṉakk' aṭimai pāṭṭatu tāṉ aṟiyāṉēlum, maṉatt' aṭaiyā vaippaṯ' ām Mālai vaṉa ttiṭarai ēṟiṯ ām vaṇṇam iyaṟṟum ituṯ allāl māṟi yār peykiṟpāṟ maṟṟu*.

[89] 4thAnt 20: *niṟpaṉavum niṉ aruḷē*.

[90] 2ndAnt 55: *nī niṉṟu niṉaipp' oḻiyā nīrmai*.

[91] 1stAnt 21: *aṭai*.

[92] 4thAnt 8: *tuṇai*.

[93] 2ndAnt 59: *poruḷ*; also in 3rdAnt 4. The word can also mean 'wealth'.

[94] 1stAnt 30: *tāy nāṭu kaṉṟē pōl*.

[95] 4thAnt 59: *iṉpu, amutam*; the latter also 3rdAnt 4.

4.313 *The overall structure*

So far I have dealt separately with four facets of the religion expressed in the early *Antâtis*; also in historical terms these facets represent independent developments. However, the Early Āḻvārs were neither aware of such distinctions, nor were they interested in keeping them separate. All four elements are integrated in one whole structure, and the nature of this integration will have to be investigated now.

(1) *Bhakti-yoga and pūjā* I begin by exploring the most difficult case, the reconciliation of *bhakti-yoga* with *pūjā*, or in more general words, of the ontological and intellectual side with the ritual. Pūtattu, at the very beginning of his poem, says:

With love as the lamp-bowl,
desire as its oil,
with the mind melting in bliss as its wick,
I have kindled the lamp
—knowledge its light—
for Nārāyaṇa.[96]

The Āḻvār combines worship, symbolized in the lighting and offering of the lamp, with *yoga*[97] in a metaphor; but we can notice already here a certain change in the character of *yoga*: an emotional element is added to it (love, desire, melting in bliss). But this suggests the question where the accent is placed: on worship as a symbolic representation of *yoga*, or *vice versa*. Some indication towards an answer may be found in the following stanza:

Checking the five [senses] inside,
taking choice flowers,
their minds filled with desire,
knowing properly,[98]
reciting and praising his names,
people of great fortune will indeed see
the feet of him of the black ocean's colour.[99]

[96] 2ndAnt 1: *aṉpē takaḷiy a, ārvamē neyy āka, iṉp' uruku cintaiy iṭu tiriy ā . . . ñāṉa ccuṭar viḷakk' ērriṉēṉ Nāraṇaṟku.*

[97] The conventional aim of *yoga* is *jñāna*, Tamil *ñāṉa*. In BhG X, 11 we find *jñāna-dīpena bhāsvatā* 'wisdom's shining lamp'; in MBh XII, 240, 35 it is said 'like a lightning in the sky, the *ātman* appears then in its self' (ref. Frauwallner, 1953, p. 135).

[98] This is the heightening of the perceptive faculties of the *buddhi* or *ātman*: see note 77 above.

[99] 2ndAnt 6: *aintum uḷḷ aṭakkiy āy malar koṇṭu ārvam ceṟinta maṉattār āy cevvē*

This may perhaps represent a 'path of bhakti', with intellectual *yoga* as the most rudimentary form of bhakti, as the means towards perfect insight, and leading over to desire and worship with praise as the more advanced expressions.[100] Its final goal is to see Māyōṉ's 'form and beauty' (Pēy 12, *paṭi*). Worship was in the *Gītā* no more than the 'humblest acts of devotion',[101] and 'integration through spiritual exercises' the highest ideal, with the Early Āḻvārs *pūjā* has clearly become emancipated.

But we must try and be more precise here. Using the rationale underlying the traditional *yoga* exercises, *pūjā* will be interpreted (a): reversing the direction, the reaction to Māyōṉ's presence in the heart in terms of worship will be explored (b); this allows us to specify the nature of the mutual interaction between the two religious attitudes (c) and assess it in historical terms (d).

(a) The most crucial juncture is that of the senses and their objects. In the *Gītā*, the uncompromisingly negative attitude of Buddhism or Sāṃkhya (indicated by their interpretation of 'touch'[102]) is overcome only in a restricted manner;[103] basically the ideal of the 'indifferent sage'[104] is still maintained. But in these

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aṟint' avaṉ raṉ pēr ōtiy ēttum peru ttavattōr kāṇparē kār ōta vaṇṇaṉ kaḻal. Compare 3rdAnt 12: *aṟiv' eṉṉum tāḷ koḻuvi aim pulaṉum tammil ceṟiv' eṉṉum tiṇ katavaṅ cemmi . . . naṉk' uṇarvār kāṇparē nā ṭōṟum paiṅk' ōta vaṇṇaṉ paṭi* 'bolting with the latch called "knowledge" and placing a firm guard called "plenitude (of desire, see 2ndAnt 6 *ārvam ceṟinta*)" on the five senses, with clear insight they will see every day the beautiful form of him with the dark-green ocean's colour'.

100 A number of possible relationships are implied in various stanzas: (a) *yoga* and *pūjā* as complementary acts: 2ndAnt 80; 1stAnt 26; 3rdAnt 14; leading to 'seeing' 1stAnt 75.81; 4thAnt 11; to *mokṣa* 4thAnt 89; (b) meditation leading to worship: 2ndAnt 4; just as wrong mental attitude prevented Hiraṇyakaśipu from worshipping: 1stAnt 90; (c) *pūjā* leading to meditation: 1stAnt 43.

101 Zaehner, 1970, p. 135, with reference to BhG IX, 26.

102 See 1.41 and 3.74, p. 234. Any contact of the senses with the material world creates further bondage to *saṃsāra*.

103 Thus the necessity for 'activity' (*karma*) is recognized; but it is separated from the 'self' and located in *prakṛti* which in turn functions only through Kṛṣṇa; see BhG VII, 12-15; XIII, 19-34. 'Nature it is which in every way does-work-and-acts; no agent is the self;' (XIII, 29) compare V, 13-15: 'For all this is my creative power (*māyā*), composed of the constituents (*guṇas*).' (VII, 14)

104 '"Lo, nothing do I do": so thinks the integrated man. . . "The senses are busied with their proper objects: [what has that to do with me?"] he thinks.' (V, 8) The ideal of 'integration' (*yoga*) is that the *yukta* is totally indifferent to the result of the action which Kṛṣṇa does by means of him.

Antâtis, the senses acquire a definitely positive value: by replacing the 'worldly' objects through Kṛṣṇa, the foundation is laid for a sensuous and blissful realization of bhakti.[105]

The mouth praises only him,
the hands worship only Māyōn̲,
the eyes and the ears see and hear
only the form and names of him.[106]

'To recite his names is agreeable to the tongue.'[107] The senses, not finding satisfaction'[108] in ordinary objects, experience the greatest bliss when 'in touch' with Māyōn̲.[109]

While according to the traditional interpretation this fatal 'touch' of the senses with their objects gives rise to the root evil of 'attachment' or 'desire' or 'thirst',[110] this is all accepted here as something positive. Engrossed in Māyōn̲ the senses give rise to desire, passion, and love. We find the following terms used:

anpu 'love'[111] e.g., 'praising him [and worshipping him] with flowers, and cherishing great love'[112].

ārvam 'passion, desire'[113] e.g., 'people with minds full of desire, taking flowers. . .'[114]

[105] *Mutatis mutandis* this replacement of worldly objects of desire with Kṛṣṇa was also noticed in the Br/ViP, where an attempt was made to interpret the *gopīs'* love for Kṛṣṇa as a kind of *yoga*. That Kṛṣṇa as the object of the senses, etc., purifies them, and thereby removes the evil influence of ordinary 'contact' is suggested in 3rdAnt 14: 'fixing one's mind on Māl and bowing at his feet, it becomes easy to reject the shoulders of women and fix one's mind on the scriptures' *Mār̲ pāl maṉañ cul̲ippa maṅkaiyar tōḷ kai viṭṭu nūl pāl maṉam vaikka noyvit' ām . . . pātam paṇintu.*

[106] 1stAnt 11: *vāy avaṉai allatu vāl̲ttātu, kai °avaṉai^y allatu tāṉ̲ tol̲ā . . . uruvoṭu pēr allāl kāṇā kaṅkaḷ kēḷā cevi.*

[107] 2ndAnt 38; *avaṉ̲ pēr ōtuvatē nāviṉāl ōttu.*

[108] 1stAnt 32 (note 76): *amaiyā.*

[109] Compare also 2ndAnt 32 and 35.

[110] See notes 102 and 105.

[111] E.g., 1stAnt 35, 71f; 2ndAnt 1.34, 65; 4thAnt 58.

[112] 2ndAnt 34: *malarāl . . . mika vāynta aṉpu ākki ētti.*

[113] E.g., 1stAnt 35.50; 2ndAnt 1.6. In 2ndAnt 35 we also find *kāmam*, and *vēṭpar* 'they will desire'.

[114] 2ndAnt 6: *malar koṇṭu ārvam ceṟinta maṉattār.* In 1stAnt 35, *ārvam* appears to include both *anpu* 'love' and *muraṇ* 'enmity'; in both senses it is accepted as bhakti, since e.g. Rāvaṇa obtained liberation through his *muraṇ*. This is a very rare example of *Gedankenrealismus/Substanzialismus* (see above 2.334 with note 126) in the *Prabandham*.

puri- 'to desire'[115] e.g., 'those who desire [and show their love] with flowers'.[116]

According to the Buddha, this desire or thirst is the cause of universal *duḥkha* 'suffering', but here the desire gives rise to the lasting pleasure and happiness of experiencing Kṛṣṇa. Thus we hear for instance in Pūtattu of:

iṉpu[117], *iṉpam*[118] 'bliss' e.g., 'an ocean of bliss'.[119]
uka- 'to rejoice, delight; desire', e.g., 'my heart, meditate in delight on his feet.'[120]
makiḻ- 'to rejoice, delight, desire', e.g., 'my body delights in singing and dancing.'[121]

With Pēy we find also a very rare example of a kind of ecstasy: 'The mind becomes disturbed and suffers confusion because of his beautiful foot.'[122]

Thus here the whole chain of factors (sense-objects, senses, emotions like passion and desire, bliss and even ecstasy) is accepted as *positive*, because Kṛṣṇa is the object from which they derive and towards which they are directed. The sensuous perception of Māyōṉ is made possible through his presence in the temple *vigraha*.

(b) But what about Kṛṣṇa in the heart who has to be realized through *yoga*? In a curious way, the Early Āḻvārs construct a parallel between Māyōṉ's presence in the heart and in the temple. We may compare the following expressions:

He is inside my mind.[123]	The lord of Vēṅkaṭam is inside my mind.[124]
He is in the *inside* (*uḷḷam*).[125]	The lord of Vēṅkaṭam is in the *uḷḷam*.[126]

[115] E.g., 2ndAnt 3.65; also 1stAnt 50.
[116] 2ndAnt 3: *malarāl purivār*.
[117] 2ndAnt 1.
[118] 2ndAnt 55.
[119] 2ndAnt 55: *iṉpa kkaṭal*.
[120] 2ndAnt 7: *aṭiyē ōr . . . neñcē ukantu*.
[121] 2ndAnt 32: *makiḻntatu . . . pāṭiʸ āṭum toḻil ākam*.
[122] 3rdAnt 23: *aṅ kaḻaṟkē maṉan tuḻāy māl āy varum*.
[123] 3rdAnt 3: *maṉatt' uḷḷāṉ*.
[124] 2ndAnt 28: *maṉatt' uḷḷāṉ Vēṅkaṭattāṉ*. .
[125] 3rdAnt 83: *uḷḷattiṉ uḷḷēʸ uḷaṉ*; 84: *uḷḷatt' uḷaṉ*.
[126] 3rdAnt 39: *uḷḷattiṉ uḷḷēʸ uḷaṉ Vēṅkaṭattāṉ*.

He is in the *uḷḷam* of those who meditate on him.[127]

The lord of Vēṅkaṭam is in the *uḷḷam* of those who meditate on him.[128]

These expressions indicate the ultimate identity of the Māyōn incarnate in the temple image and present in the heart. That 'lord of Vēṅkaṭam' is not just a paraphrase for 'Māyōn' generally, but suggests in fact that his presence in the heart is seen as a personal form of the *arcâvatāra*, is brought out clearly in the following phrase: 'Māyan very gently entered into my heart, and never going away from it again, he stands, sits, and reclines in it.'[129] The Āḻvār alludes here to the three different postures in which three temple images appear.[130] This means, that the love and passion, which are stimulated in the heart by the sensuous experience of the temple *vigraha*, encounter and encompass Māyōn who abides in the heart; that passionate love is the '*pūjā*' appropriate also for the '*arcā* in the heart'.

(c) Thus *pūjā* appears here as the physical enactment of the processes of internal *yoga*, or *yoga* as an internal realization of *pūjā*. The two attitudes have been brought into such close proximity that very frequently reference is made to both of them in the same context. In an expression like 'meditate without forgetting on his feet!',[131] this constant meditation suggests intellectual bhakti, while 'his feet' is idiomatic for the temple image. Moreover, both approaches are combined in the same idiom, viz. 'to see' his form and beauty.[132] In most cases it is impossible to distinguish here between the sight of the temple image and the internal vision of Māyōn in the heart. Thus the third *Antâti* begins:

[127] 4thAnt 86: *uḷḷuvār uḷḷatt' uḷaṉ*.

[128] 3rdAnt 40: *uḷḷuvār uḷḷatt' uḷaṉ Vēṅkaṭattāṉ*.

[129] 3rdAnt 94: *metteṉavē niṉṟāṉ iruntāṉ kiṭantāṉ eṉ neñcattu poṉṟāmai Māyaṉ pukuntu*. Compare 4thAnt 92 (see note 87 above) and 30: *eṉṉat' uḷḷattu niṉṟāṉ kiṭakkumē veḷḷattu* 'who is standing and sitting in my inside, is reclining on the ocean'.

[130] The commentator Aṇṇa. identifies the three temples as Ūrakam, Pāṭakam, and Veḫkā, all three in Kāñcīpuram. In Ūrakam, Vāmana is depicted stepping across the universe; Nārāyaṇa's reclining on the serpent in Veḫkā is referred to already *Perump.* 373.

[131] 2ndAnt 41: *pātamē nī maṟavēl niṉai*.

[132] 'To see' in the sense of experiencing Māl is found 3rdAnt 1f. 8, 12, 35, 82-5, etc. (also 2ndAnt 65). Kṛṣṇa's beauty is mentioned 3rdAnt 5ff, 9, 85, etc; 85: *eḻil poliyumē* 'his beauty is overflowing'. Compare 4thAnt 21f *aḻaku*, *aḻakiyaṉ* 'beauty', 'beautiful'.

Today I have seen his body of gold; . . .
today I have seen your feet,
while my mind united with you.[133]

'Mind' might be taken here to suggest a vision obtained through meditational exercises; but compare the following stanza:

My eyes call to each other 'look! look!'
and rejoice in [looking at] the body of gold
of him whose chest is radiant with ornaments and garlands,
I worship with my hands the anklets of fine gold
and sing in *pāṇs* about his deeds.[134]

Here the vision is clearly placed in the context of *pūjā*.

This interpenetration of both approaches leads us in fact to the brink of emotional bhakti: To see Māyōṉ's beauty in the image, to have here in concrete form a symbol of the innermost centre of one's self, and to cherish the love and passion engendered thereby, stimulate a drive to bridge the factual gap between (externally) the *bhakta* and the *vigraha* and (internally) the ego and Māyōṉ in the *uḷḷam* of the person. This drive aims at close physical contact with the *vigraha* in a ritual context (like touching the feet with one's forehead), and at (internal) union. A number of verbs are used to denote this, and these have all erotic and sexual overtones.

pulku-[135] 'to embrace, be attached (as friends); to copulate.'[136]
cēr-[137] 'to become united; be in close friendship; be in contact with; to copulate.'[138]
maruvu-[139] 'to be united in affection; come near, embrace; have sexual intercourse.'[140]

[133] 3rdAnt 1f: *poṉ mēṉi kaṇṭēṉ . . . iṉru: iṉrē kaḷal kaṇṭēṉ . . . uṉṉai marukkaṇṭu koṇṭ' eṉ maṉam.*

[134] 3rdAnt 35: *kāṇ kāṇ eṉa viruppum kaṇkaḷ . . . pūṇ ṭār akalattāṉ poṉ mēṉi pāṇ kāṭ toḷil pāṭi . . . cem poṟ kaḷal . . . yām toḷutum kai.*

[135] DED 3533; 1stAnt 50 and 53.

[136] MTL for *Caturakarāti.* In TVM I, 2, 4 and PTM I, 7, 9, the verb occurs in the sense of 'to become totally attached to (Māl)', and with reference to his union with Śrī.

[137] 1stAnt 57.97; in 42 it refers to Śrī, Earth, and Piṉṉai.

[138] MTL for *Taṉippaṭarriraṭṭu.*

[139] DED 3865; 1stAnt 91; 3rdAnt 2; 1stAnt 62 with reference to Kṛṣṇa and Piṉṉai. Compare the following phrases in which the verb is used: TVM II 7, 7 'coming close to your feet and worshipping', PTM IV, 9, 2 'O youthful one with whom to unite is sweet!'

aṇai-[141] 'to come near, in contact; touch; copulate.'[142]
puṇar-[143] 'to join, unite, cohabit, copulate.'[144]

In Poykai these verbs occur particularly in the context of *pūjā*,[145] while in Pēy they are linked with the more ambiguous 'seeing'.[146]

Thus we can finally say that *yoga* and *pūjā* are integrally connected in the early *Antâtis*, in that on the one hand the particular emotional features of *pūjā* have penetrated the traditional *bhakti-yoga*, and on the other hand *pūjā* has evolved as an external meeting of one's innermost self. Together, these attitudes gave rise to a mysticism of union in which the *bhakta* desires to unite with Māyōṉ in a metaphorical act of love. This union breaks the barriers that divide Māyōṉ as the centre of the soul from Māyōṉ within the symbolic form of the *vigraha*.

(d) At this stage it is appropriate to place this fusion of *yoga* and *pūjā* which the Early Āḻvārs achieved through purely devotional-psychological means, in a larger historical context. This will in fact reveal that they were original in integrating the two separate traditions.

We can assume that they knew directly the *Bhagavadgītā* in which we can locate the origin of *bhakti-yoga*. Their *veṇpās* contain many allusions to this work.[147]

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[140] MTL for *Piramōttarakāṇṭam*; metaphorical also in PTM IV, 9, 2.

[141] 3rdAnt 82.

[142] MTL for *Kūrmapurāṇam*. In PāḷTM VI, 6 it refers to Kṛṣṇa's love making with a *gopī*.

[143] DED 3423(b); 3rdAnt 82.

[144] PāḷTM VI, 8 (also 3): 'when you had entered . . . to make love to her who had been waiting for you' (about Kṛṣṇa and a *gopī*). Compare *Kali.* 118 *puṇarcci* 'coition', *Jīvakao° puṇarvu* 'dto.'

[145] See 50, 53, 57, 91, 97. But 42 and 62 show that the poet is aware of the erotic undercurrent of the verbs, since he uses them there with reference to Kṛṣṇa's and Piṉṉai's union.

[146] 3rdAnt 2: 'I have *seen* today your anklet, while my mind *united* with you'; 82: 'where shall we *unite* with him and *see* him?'

[147] Compare already notes 68, 70, 72, 73, 75, 97. Further similarities are 4thAnt 81: BhG XIV, 3f; 1stAnt 7: BhG VII, 20, 22, 25; 1stAnt 44: BhG VII, 21; IV, 11; 1stAnt 47, 50: BhG VI, 10, 12-15, 30f. The actual speaking of the *Gītā* appears alluded to in 4thAnt 71 (see note 29 above under 4.312·2). MBh XIII, 149 (Bombay), the *Viṣṇusahasranāma* (in a conversation between Śiva and Umā) is definitely referred to in 4thAnt 78; the thousand names are alluded to also 1stAnt 65; 2ndAnt 73, 77, etc.

But which is the second tradition which constitutes the background to their treatment of temple worship? In general terms we may assume this to be (the predecessors? of) groups which a few centuries later can be identified as Vaikhānasas and Pāñcarātrins.[148] Certainly from medieval times onwards, the various temples referred to by these Āḻvārs are divided between these two groups of *pūjārins*, Vēṅkaṭam being the most important centre of the Vaikhānasas.[149] There is firm evidence for the presence of both groups in the South for the last few centuries of the first millennium AD.[150] But I think it would be a mistake to try and identify the Early Āḻvārs themselves with either the Vaikhānasas or the Pāñcarātrins, because allusions to the two most characteristic features of the groups are missing: the five *mūrtis* with the former[151] and the five *vyūhas* with the latter. But what is more important: it would appear[152] that the Early Āḻvārs, deriving some general information from these schools, are unique in fusing the temple worship with theistic *yoga* as a unified form of devotion. Although both schools cultivate *yoga* and *pūjā*, their literature shows that they were kept separate.[153] Both schools being representatives of

[148] See above 1.43 with notes 92-7.

[149] See Goudriaan, 1965, pp. 10f.

[150] Thus Goudriaan (1965, p. 10) regards the *Kāśyapa-jñānakāṇḍa* as South Indian and dates it in the 9th or 10th century AD; the earlier *Vaikhānasasūtras* are dated about AD 400, but here the South Indian origin is not clear. Nāthamuni (10th cent.) considered the Pāñcarātra *Saṃhitās* as Veda-like revelation. The history of both groups in South India before the ninth century AD seems obscure. Compare above 1.43 with notes 98-100.

[151] Goudriaan, 1965, pp. 116f (ch. 34); pp. 230-40 (chs. 77f); compare Gonda, 1969, pp. 239; 242 note 34.

[152] As mentioned already above (1.6), our study avoids any discussion of the Pāñcarātra, etc. This is a major *lacuna*, but without very extensive research in the vast literature, such a discussion would be meaningless.

[153] Works on temple ritual (generically called usually 'Āgamas') are traditionally divided into four sections, two of which are *yoga* and *caryā* (the actual *pūjā*). The *Padma-Saṃhitā*, one of the most important handbooks for the Pāñcarātrins, contains a *yoga-pāda* in which *yoga* is treated along conventional lines, and—separated by the *kriyā-pāda* on temple construction—the *caryā-pāda*. The *Kāśyapa-jñānakāṇḍa* inserts into the section on temple construction and image making passages on meditation (ch. 35, Goudriaan, 1965, pp. 117-20; compare ch. 65), while it deals with the actual *pūjā* in chs. 69-90 (Goudriaan, pp. 198-282, = *caryā-kāṇḍa*). Among the Śrīvaiṣṇavas who adopted ritual practices *inter alia* from the Pāñcarātrins, the daily rites (*nityas*) are divided *inter alia* into *ijyā* (= *pūjā*) and *yoga*. In all these cases, *pūjā* and *yoga* are separate, although complementary, elements. A somewhat

Northern forms of religion, the synthesis of the Early Āḻvārs thus appears as a typically Tamil response which manifests itself in the mysticism of union and expresses itself through Tamil poetic structures.

(2) *Myth and pūjā* We may now turn to the question how the other two facets of religion are related to this complex form of devotion. We recollect that particularly with Pēy the myths about Māyōṉ are also objects of meditation, and in fact another area in which Māyōṉ's beauty can be 'seen'. While Pēy is worshipping and gazing in rapture at Māl's 'golden body', he is 'singing in *pāṇs* about his [mythical] deeds'.[154] Or again: 'The colour of the ocean's water is indeed his beauty; stepping across the universe is indeed his beauty.'[155] 'Does not indeed the beauty of him who killed the bulls overflow?'[156] But in addition, these mythical exploits manifest Māyōṉ's *māyā*. Like no other figure, Kṛṣṇa with his various pranks and miracles is the appropriate symbol of such *māyā* linked with beauty; as we have seen above, Kṛṣṇa plays by far the most important rôle in the mythological allusions of the early *Antâtis*.

An impact of this understanding of myth on the devotional attitudes would be natural, and in fact this can be pointed out through certain examples. It appears to me that the manner in which myth is understood by these Āḻvārs had a certain modifying influence on their devotion, on their drive towards union.[157]

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different distinction is drawn between *yoga* and the sensuous relish of worship in the (3000)*Guruparamparāprabhāvam* (p. 50). There Nāthamuni, when he has heard a *tirumoḻi* by Nammāḻvār, says: 'It is much sweeter to perform the *kuṇânupavam* (Skt. *guṇânubhava*) by means of this song than to experience Kaṇṇaṉ through *yōkam* (Skt. *yoga*).' The first term means the full enjoyment of all the attractive and entrancing qualities of Viṣṇu, in short, his overwhelming beauty (the particular song referred to sings about Viṣṇu in the temple of Kuṭantai). The difference between '*pūjā*' and this *guṇânubhava* lies in the fact that the latter term implies the full approach developed by the Early Āḻvārs out of the two original components.

[154] 3rdAnt 35; see note 134.

[155] 3rdAnt 6: *aḻak' anṟē . . . āḻi nīr vaṇṇam aḻak' anṟēy aṇṭam kaṭattal.*

[156] 3rdAnt 85: *poliyumē (. . .) ēṟṟ' uyiraiy aṭṭāṉ eḻil.*

[157] The two examples found in Poykai of the 'union' of Kṛṣṇa and Piṉṉai (1stAnt 42, 62; see notes 137, 139, 145 above) do not really contradict this statement. They are too marginal and unrepresentative, when we compare them with the very many references to the *māyā* which myth manifests.

Māyā demonstrates the unpredictable, uncanny, ambiguous, confusing, evasive, obscuring nature of the absolute. What may appear on one occasion as 'rich grace' can always also imply 'injury'[158] for the *bhakta*. Thus he may desire to enjoy his beauty and 'unite' with Māyōn, but *māyā* could always interfere with this. In such cases, 'union' changes into 'separation'.

When one thinks about it carefully,
he is impossible to perceive;
he is impossible to see in his true nature,
even when he has entered into my heart.
Thus where can I unite with him
and see him hereafter?[159]

There are, however, relatively few such statements in the early *Antâtis*; the initial drive towards union with Māyōn present in the heart and the *vigraha* is no more than marginally tempered by the realization of *māyā*. The faithful performance of integrated *yoga* and *pūjā* allowed these Āḻvārs to maintain a basic calm.

Though people say 'he is full of tricks (=Māyaṉ)',
and though he is impossible to see,
he the sweet one is inside my heart.[160]

We cannot, however, restrict the explanation of these insights exclusively to the impact of the Āḻvārs' understanding of myth; their conception of him as the absolute beyond all human comprehension must have played an important rôle in this as well. Thus Poykai asks: 'Who can comprehend your form?'[161] and states that even Brahmā is unable to see him truly.[162] Humble worship remains the only means of relating to him 'whom it is impossible to meditate about and who is remote'.[163] The manner in which these limitations to a mystical union are accepted suggests

158 2ndAnt 24: *ār aruḷum kēṭum avaṉ.*

159 3rdAnt 82: *uṇaril uṇarv' ariyaṉ uḷḷam pukuntu puṇarilum kāṇp' ariyaṉ uṇmai . . . (kōmāṉai) eṅk' aṇaintu kāṇṭum iṉi?* Also 3rdAnt 19.83f and 4thAnt 10 state that Māyōn is beyond perception.

160 3rdAnt 83: *avaṉ Māyaṉ eṉa^{v} uraipparēlum . . . avaṉ kāṇp' ariyaṉēlum iṉiyavaṉ . . . uḷḷattiṉ uḷḷē^{y} uḷaṉ.*

161 1stAnt 68: *uṇarvār ār uṉṉ uruvan taṉṉai?*

162 Ibid. 56.

163 Ibid. 65: *niṉaitark' ariyāṉai ccēyāṉai.*

that the realization of Māyōn through meditational, *yogic* means is regarded as the 'optional' or 'additional' element, while *pūjā* remains the fundamental attitude. This is justified by reference to the universal presence of Māyōn in the heart.

They themselves exist;
their *uḷḷam* exists within them;
the flower of the lotus exists;
the time to praise exists;
they have foreheads that can touch his feet;
thus it is impossible to go to hell.[164]

This means, that all essential ingredients for *mokṣa* are available, and that an act of worship and surrender is sufficient to achieve this.[165]

(3) *Summary* The previous observations have suggested that the temple with Māyōn's *arcâvatāra* is the psychological focal point around which the whole structure of the bhakti of the Early Āḻvārs revolves. Most important is the new rôle which *bhakti-yoga* plays in it. Since no systematic theology is attempted in the lapidary *veṇpās*, we need not be surprised to find certain inconsistencies and inadequately linked joints where historically (and possibly sociologically) different elements are combined. But I think it is clear that one consistent theme runs through the devotional approach: a mysticism of union in which yogic meditation and the realization of the *antaryāmī* are pervaded by the sentiments of *pūjā*. Yet the image also reminds the *bhakta*—very tentatively in these *Antâtis*—that Kṛṣṇa as the absolute is impossible to see in his true nature. Thus at least in principle a distinction is drawn

[164] 2ndAnt 21: *tām uḷarē tamm uḷḷam uḷḷ uḷatē tāmaraiyiṉ pūʸ uḷatēʸ ēttum poḻut' uṇṭē . . . tāḷ maruvu cenniyarē . . . narakam cērvat' aritu.*

[165] This assessment of *yoga* as non-essential agrees in principle with the analysis of the Śrīvaiṣṇavas. Traditional *bhakti-yoga* is there distinguished from the *sufficient* means towards *mokṣa* styled *prapatti*. However, *prapatti* is much more restricted in scope than the comprehensive devotional approach illustrated by the Early Āḻvārs: it is reduced to the element of 'taking refuge' and 'surrendering' one's self totally to Viṣṇu's grace. The ritual acts of worship and praise are styled *kaiṅkarya* for example, by the Śrīvaiṣṇava theologians; the paramount importance of this facet of religion (justified theologically by reference to man's nature as Viṣṇu's *śeṣa* 'totally dependent slave') can be seen from the fact that *kaiṅkarya* takes place even in the state of liberation in Viṣṇu's heaven (see Hardy, 1977, pp. 132-35, with notes 91-3).

between 'symbolic representations' of Māyōṉ, viz. areas where his presence is covered up by his *māyā*: temple, myth, and the human heart, and Māyōṉ in his true, eternal, unobstructed nature.[166]

Comparing this situation with our initial definition of 'emotional bhakti', it is clear that in spite of all the generally emotional features we have met, that title applies only to certain aspects. On the level of personal experience, the aesthetic element is certainly developed while the erotic appears at least as an undercurrent; but typically ecstatic features are absent.[167] The other two levels, of myth and poetry, are altogether missing. A poetic cosmos of symbols lies outside the range of the *Antâtis*,[168] and myth is treated only in so far as it is relevant to personal devotion[169]. Thus we

[166] Medieval Śrīvaiṣṇava theology employs an interesting simile for the different modes of being which are here attributed to Māyōṉ (viz. as the *avatāra*, *arcā*, and *antaryāmī*). They are compared to the different forms in which water exists: in a river, where water that has passed by in the past is not 'present'/'available' any more (*-avatāra*); as the moisture in the earth which cannot be perceived (*-antaryāmī*); and as the water in a lake, which is 'present' and 'available' (*-arcā*). See, for example, *Acāryahṛdayam sūtra* 74 with Maṇavāḷa mā muṉi's commentary; *Śrīvacanabhūṣaṇam sūtra* 39. Compare Hardy, 1978, 4.44 with note 147.

[167] The only indication of something like 'ecstasy' is 3rdAnt 23 (see note 122 above).

[168] It appears to be fairly impossible to interpret 3rdAnt 69 as a poem with an *akattiṇai* frame. In an abbreviated form, the stanza runs: *Vēṅkaṭam pāṭum, tuḻāy cūṭum karuṅ kuḻal mēl—Māl kiṭanta kaṭal nīr āṭuvāṉ pukum* 'sing about Vēṅkaṭam, adorn with *tulsi* the black locks, enter to bathe in the ocean where Māl reclines.' A subject is missing here, and the commentators have suggested various interpretations. *Pāṭum*, etc, could be imperatives (Andronov § 145; mentioned also by Aṇṇa. and Vīra.). But the two commentators on the stanza reject this as morphological anachronism: *-um* as imperative termination belongs to a later stage of Tamil. Parallel to 3rdAnt 15 (*kiṭakkum*), 19 (*oḻiyum*), 63 (*tōṉṟum*), etc., this *-um* may be interpreted as third person plural (possible according to Andronov § 158) of the present/future; with Vīra. we may supply the subject '*bhaktas*'. But Aṇṇa. inserts a third person singular *feminine*, viz. 'my daughter' (i.e., =*pāṭukiṉṟāḷ*). Thus the poem is interpreted by him as spoken by a mother about the infatuation of her daughter with Kṛṣṇa. As we shall see from the following section onward, this is a common poetic conceit in later Āḻvārs; but it would be absolutely unique in the four early *Antâtis*, lacking any rationale. Aṇṇa. himself has to admit that 'the First Āḻvārs have written only poems which contain pure bhakti sentiment, and none that have any connection at all with *śṛṅgāra-rasa*' (*ad locum*). Thus we may supply here either '*bhaktas*' as the subjects, or regard the verb-forms as imperatives

[169] This means mythical incidents are not described on the actual plot-level of a stanza, with the mythical *dramatis personae* expressing their sentiments. Moreover,

can speak here of an inchoate emotional bhakti which is restricted to the level of personal experience.

4.314 *The contemporary scene*

Our nearest parallel among Vaiṣṇava works are the Tirumāl hymns of the—presumably slightly earlier—*Paripāṭal*. They agree with the *Antâtis* in that the awareness of Māyōn as the 'distant' absolute is combined with temple worship. However, *bhakti-yoga* is absent here, and that means, naturally, that also the mystical drive towards union which results from the combination of *yoga* and *pūjā* is absent. The hymns are much more 'objective', for they are primarily concerned with the universal mysteries of the absolute and his mythical exploits, and no self-conscious individual I struggles with the concrete personal implications of those mysteries.

A comparison with Kāraikkāl Ammaiyār, a Śaivite poetess whose poems are presumed to be the oldest works in the *Tirumurai*,[170] is equally revealing. The *Arputa tiruv Antâti*,[171] her main work, shows a much simpler and less emotional form of bhakti, although both in terms of poetic form and content many similarities exist.

The key-concept of her bhakti is that of being Śiva's slave and to perform his service. We hear frequently of *āḷ* 'slave', *āṭ koḷ* 'to enslave, accept as servant' and *āṭ paṭu* 'to be enslaved'.[172]

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erotic aspects implied in certain myths are not consciously applied to personal devotion (compare note 157 above).

[170] Karavelane, 1956 (p. ii), Nilakanta Sastri, 1966 (p. 368), Zvelebil, 1975 (pp. 135, 137) etc. mention the middle of the sixth century AD as the period when she flourished. Their evidence however rests basically on Cēkkiḻār's *Periyapurāṇam* (twelth century) the reliability of which they do not prove. She signs her poems as the ogress of Kāraikkāl' (*pēy makaḷ*); Kāraikkāl, the modern Karikal, is a town about 150 km south of Pondicherry, near Nagapattinam. Thus she belongs to a geographical area different from that of the Early Āḻvārs. On '*pēy*' as a proper name see above, notes 17–19 *ad* 4.2. Pope (1900, pp. 111–13 notes) provides a summary of the legends concerning her life, and Cēkkiḻār's account is printed along with a French translation in Karavelane, 1956, pp. 1-14.

[171] <Skt. *adbhuta*; thus either: 'the wonderful *Antâti*' or (better) 'the *Antâti* about the Wonderful One (= Śiva)'. I use the abbreviation ATAnt, and for her second poem, the *Iraṭṭaimaṇimālai*, IMM.

[172] ATAnt 3f, 7f, 11f, 23, 31, 61, 79, 91; IMM 4, 16:—*aṭiyaṉ* ATAnt 44, *aṭimai* ATAnt 69.

Siva is once paraphrased as *enn uṭaiyāṉ* 'who possesses me'.[173] The relationship of master and servant, although not unknown to the Early Āḻvārs, is much more pronounced here. We may recall that 'loyalty' is in fact one of the oldest connotations of the term 'bhakti'.

On the other hand, the 'worship-and-praise' complex is represented by the same phraseology.[174] Emotional undercurrents are not absent,[175] but we may detect a somewhat greater stress on intellectual bhakti, viz. on 'thinking about Śiva'.[176] Once we find *neñcattān* 'who possesses my heart' or 'who is in my heart',[177] but any specific reference to *yoga* is lacking. 'To see Śiva' occurs in a number of places.[178]

We may conclude that Ammaiyār's bhakti stands midway[179] between the Tirumāl hymns of the *Paripāṭal* and the Early Āḻvārs. It is basically a loyal loving service of Śiva which expresses itself in praise, worship, and meditation. But the mystical rapture, the desire to 'unite' with the object of devotion, which I have derived from the fusion of *pūjā* and *yoga*, is absent.

One final point is important here. When Nammālvār—presumably for the first time in Southern Vaiṣṇava literature—composes poems which express the emotions of a girl, it is not possible to argue that he is copying the poetry of an older female mystic, e.g., Ammaiyār. She does not speak in her poems as the female beloved of Śiva in any manner which could have served as a model for Nammāḻvār.

[173] ATAnt 92.

[174] *Toḻu-*: ATAnt 17, 40; IMM 3, 13; *aṇi-*: ATAnt 79; IMM 19; *puṇai-*: ATAnt 87; *vaṇaṅku-*: IMM 12. Compare ATAnt 1: *aṭi cēr-*, 16 *tāḷ cēr-* 'to come close to his feet'. *Ēttu-*: ATAnt 37, 79; *ōtu-*: ATAnt 73; *paravu-*: IMM 3. 'To speak about Śiva': ATAnt 40, 91; IMM 1, 6.

[175] *Aṉpu*: ATAnt 2f, 31, 87, 93, 96; IMM 16f; *kātal*: ATAnt 1.17; *virumpu*: ATAnt 73, 93; *iṉpu* 'bliss': ATAnt 85.

[176] *Niṉai-*: ATAnt 11, 14f, 46; IMM 12f; *uṇar-*: ATAnt 59, 86, 91; *eṇ-*: ATAnt 85; *cintai*: ATAnt 17, 45f, 79, 89; *cintaṉai*: ATAnt 24.

[177] ATAnt 6.

[178] *Kāṇ-*: ATAnt 17, 19, 45, 61, 72, 85, 96; *nōkku-*: ATAnt 9, 45; *kāṭṭu-*: ('to show, reveal') ATAnt 70.

[179] As it happens, also geographically. But our sources are too limited to allow for any serious hypothesis concerning the inter-relation between the character of bhakti and the geographical distribution.

4.32 Nammāḻvār (Catakōpaṉ)

Since the four *Antâtis* of the Early Āḻvārs constitute the foundation upon which later Kṛṣṇaism in the South is built, they have been analysed in some detail. It has been possible to determine the specific area from which emotional bhakti could further develop. Whether approached as *yoga*, or as the theologoumenon of the *antaryāmī*, this specific area represents a religious attitude which is different from that underlying popular Tamil religion (including the Kṛṣṇaite folk culture documented in the *Cilappatikāram* and *Kalittokai*) and that expressed in the Tirumāl hymns of the *Paripāṭal*. Māl is approached by the Early Āḻvārs as the god of mysticism, as the 'distant, transcendent' Absolute who yet allows himself to be experienced in the 'heart' of the *bhakta* and in the temple. However, although writing at the very fringe of Tamiḻ-nāṭu, the first four Āḻvārs are deeply Tamil, not only in their language, in their poetic style, in their mythological repertoire, and in their geographical references, but most pronouncedly in their emotional and sensuous worship of the temple *vigraha*, in which we can recognize the ancient anthropocentricity of the Tamils. This Tamil-ness runs contrary to the Northern intellectual *bhakti-yoga*, while at the same time *bhakti-yoga* provides new potential for Tamil religion and culture, which till now has evolved no more than disconnected fragments of attitudes towards Māyōṉ.[1] Thus, if my assumption of the *akattiṇai*'s function as an ideology even for so late a period as the seventh century is correct, and if the religious blueprint of the Early Āḻvārs came to be known in the Pāṇṭiyan region (which alone has documented *akam* poetry for that period), an interesting question emerges: how could 'emotional *yoga-cum-pūjā*' be harmonized with the *akattiṇai*? I believe that we have an answer to that question in the works of Nammāḻvār, who belongs to the Pāṇṭiya country and to about the seventh century,[2] and who is almost certainly acquainted with the Early Āḻvārs' spirituality. Three of his four works require analysis here; the two smaller works could well be described as the Āḻvār's experiments with the two

[1] A summary of the partial integrations of Māyōṉ in Tamil culture has been given in 3.72; the fundamental problem which has prevented a homogeneous approach is that of Kṛṣṇaite religion being unable to deal with the 'separation' postulated by the *mullai* function of Māyōṉ.

[2] As suggested above in 4.22-3.

influences of the Early Āḻvārs and the *akattiṇai* respectively. His *Periyatiruvantâti* remains in close touch with the early *Antâtis*, while his *Tiruviruttam* provides a definite place in the *mullai* landscape for Māyōṉ as the god of the mystic. The large *Tiruvāymoḻi* emerges out of these experiments as his mature, homogeneous, and absolutely unique creation:[3] in its theological poetry and poetic theology we witness the birth of emotional Kṛṣṇa bhakti, and indeed one of its most perfect expressions in the history of Kṛṣṇaism. But at the outset of our analysis attention may be drawn to the principle underlying the whole of the Nammāḻvār's poetic and theological cosmos: that of dialectics. The following pages will amply illustrate what is meant by this; at this stage it will suffice to point out some of the basic paradoxes we have encountered, and it will become clear that only a dialectical approach can resolve them. The *cāṉrōṉ* ideal aims at the full realization of all human faculties, while Kṛṣṇa demands service and surrender; the *bhakta* worshipping in the temple takes in through his senses beauty, and yet he is aware that Māyōṉ transcends all representation; as the *antaryāmī* Kṛṣṇa abides in the very centre of human personality, but frequently the emotions seem to indicate that 'he is not there'; Māyōṉ's landscape is that of the jasmine in which the girl longs for the return of her lover, and at the same time the whole cosmos is pervaded by Māyōṉ. The genius of Nammāḻvār succeeds in creating a dialectical synthesis of all these contradictions, paradoxes, and tensions, which are as much part and parcel of the Tamil tradition itself as they are brought about by the meeting of two totally different cultural traditions (North and South).

4.321 *The Periyatiruvantâti*[4]

The early four *Antâtis* are *summae* of Kṛṣṇaism, and so is the

[3] Needless to add that we have no evidence concerning the relative chronology of Nammāḻvār's works; it is only in a logical or stylistic sense that the TVM may be called 'later'. To complicate matters, the PTAnt is not signed; thus it is theoretically possible (*contra* Śrīvaiṣṇava tradition) to assume different authorship. But the links between the TVM and the PTAnt (and the TVir) are so strong, that whether or not there is any difference in authorship the PTAnt must be regarded as a major source for the TVM.

[4] The 'Great Sacred *Antâti*'; 'great' expresses here most likely the admiration or homage of later Śrīvaiṣṇava tradition for Nammāḻvār, though with 87 stanzas it is shorter than the four early *Antâtis*.

TVM, which after all is an *antâti* too. Although stylistically closely related to these *Antâtis*, the *Periyatiruvantâti* would not qualify as such a *summa*, since it deals with selected themes from the earlier works, and that in a very idiosyncratic manner. Instead of 'objective statements', the author is mainly interested in the personal struggle between himself and Kṛṣṇa. In more than a quarter of the stanzas[5] the mystic addresses his 'heart', indicating that his 'I', arguing with the 'heart', abides in a 'torn personality'; thus an earlier stereotyped feature becomes loaded with meaning.[6] This must not be taken to mean that the rôles are unambiguously distributed. Sometimes it is the heart which refuses to accord with bhakti: 'Heart! Join in with us [in harmony] and do your work!'[7] 'Heart! Go away; although I teach you, you do not accept [my advice].'[8] On other occasions the heart is the one willing to abandon itself to Kṛṣṇa: 'The heart leaves me behind and runs after [what seems to be Kṛṣṇa].'[9]

While generally speaking the 'I' and the 'heart' are meant to coordinate their efforts to love Kṛṣṇa (viz. bhakti), the PTAnt stresses one aspect of that coordination in particular: *to praise Kṛṣṇa*. Both the first and the last stanza mention this motif, so that 'praise' appears as the theme which like a frame holds the remaining, self-contained stanzas of the PTAnt together: 'We shall embed in well-joined verses and utter with a tongue full of love [His] fame',[10] 'Put your effort into praising [Him] always!'[11] Moreover, the same theme is referred to frequently in other stanzas.[12]

However, since the Āḻvār's personality manifests itself as 'torn', and since moreover Kṛṣṇa's own nature is far from unambiguous, such praise again becomes paradoxical; thus the Āḻvār speaks to

[5] 1, 9f, 12, 14f, 19f, 23, 32, 37-40, 46, 57, 60, 65ff, 74, 78, 83f, 87 (= 25 or about 29%, compare Poykai and Pēy (Table XV) 13% each).

[6] While in the early *Antâtis* this is hardly more than a stylistic convention, it is here directly connected with the Āḻvār's mysticism. We have here the first example of his dialectical approach.

[7] 1: *neñcē! iyarruvāy emmoṭu nī kūṭi.*

[8] 12: *pō neñcē! nī...upatēcan tariṉum kai kkoḷḷāy.*

[9] 49: *neñc' ōṭum...emmai ppirintu.* See note 24 for the full poem.

[10] 1: *nayapp' uṭaiya nāv īṉ toṭai kiḷaviyuḷ potivōm...pukaḻ.*

[11] 87: *eppōtuṁ...ētta muyal.*

[12] 2, 12, 15f, 37, 40, 43ff, 52, 65, 67, 82ff, etc.

his heart: 'Remove the stains by speaking [in praise of Him], even if it is only by ridiculing [Him]'.[13] But Nammāḷvār proceeds further in that he relates his own torn personality to Kṛṣṇa's influence upon him:

O Māl with red eyes! who are confusion (*māl*) inside us! Don't be angry: see, that we praise you and scold you, that we don't praise you and don't scold you—is [the result of] our mental confusion (*māl*) . . .[14]

While here the responsibility is at least linguistically (through the triple *māl*) attributed to Māyōṉ, in many other stanzas the Āḻvār acknowledges his own shortcoming and deficiency with respect to full bhakti; the awareness of 'sin' (and the thought of hell, etc.) is an often repeated theme of the PTAnt.[15]

But then occasionally this awareness of sin yields to an entirely different mood, to an exuberance caused by Kṛṣṇa's presence and grace in spite of his own sinfulness. 'Who is of greater fame than I?'[16] and simply: 'I am great.'[17]

Noticing such paradoxical aspects in himself, the poet cannot fail to discover similar contradictions in 'Māl who is *māl* in us.'[18] The following stanza illustrates clearly that only a dialectical approach (poetic and theological) can grasp those contradictions.

O Lord of tricks (Māyaṉ)! You are the mother who bore me, the father who procreated me; you, O mother! placed your mouth on [Pūtanā's] breast, to destroy her of great deceit (*māyam*).[19]

[13] 38: *ēciyēy āyiṉum...pēciyē pōkkāy piḷai.* The object of the ridiculing are the beatings Kṛṣṇa received from Yaśodā for stealing the butter.

[14] 2: *pukaḻvōm paḻippōm pukaḻōm paḻiyōm...eṅ kaṇ māl ceṅ kaṇ Māl cīṟal nī... eṅkaḷ māl kaṇṭāy ivai.* Compare 1stAnt 73: *pukaḻvāy paḻippāy* '(O heart!) you will praise and scold!' and 3rdAnt 23: *maṉam tuḻāy māl āy varum* 'the mind becomes perplexed and experiences confusion'. Such inchoate remarks are fully exploited by Nammāḷvār.

[15] 7f, 10, 14, 22, 26, 30ff, 34, 38, 44ff, 54, 57, 59, 65, 73, 76, 79, 82, 86f. We hear of 'fierce hell' (21,40,46,60) and of Yama (23: Namaṉ). For a more detailed analysis of what the Āḻvārs mean by *tī/aru* etc: *viṉai* 'wicked/rare/strong...deeds', which I have frequently translated as 'sins', see 4.421, latter part.

[16] 4: *enniṉ miku pukaḻār yāvarē?*

[17] 75: *yāṉ periyaṉ.*

[18] See note 14 above.

[19] 5: *perṟa tāy nīyē, piṟappitta tantai nī...Māya! mā māyavaḷai māya mulai vāy vaitta nīy ammā!—Ammā!* ('o mother!') could simply be an interjection, but this would hardly eliminate the contrast implied.

Here the dialectics consist in the paradox father: mother, in Māyaṉ's *māyā* through which he overcame Pūtanā's *māyam*, and in him as 'mother' who yet as a baby sucks the breast of a pretended 'mother', the ogress Pūtanā.

It follows naturally that a similar pattern is imposed upon the Āḻvār's experience of Māl.

We great sinners are far [from Him] . . ., while He who owns my heart by himself has united [with me] as my intimate friend.[20]

In a moment of exuberance he realizes the full significance of Māl's indwelling in the mystic as his 'intimate friend': 'Earth and the vast heaven are inside you, and you are inside me without separation!'[21]

Even these few examples, I think, illustrate a completely novel type of religious awareness; little resemblance is retained to the relatively calm *bhakti-yoga* of the Early Āḻvārs. In fact, Nammāḻvār is quite conscious of this; for him 'seeing Kṛṣṇa's body' supersedes all other religious attitudes and methods.

Are you pushing me away [from you] by pointing out [to me] the 'spiritual techniques' towards you? Or are you going to show [me your] body?[22]

We have arrived here at the centre of Nammāḻvār's mysticism, metaphorically styled 'to see His body'. While 'to see' stands for a complete experience involving all the senses (and satisfying them), 'body' suggests Kṛṣṇa's nature. However, since such an experience conflicts with the nature of the contingent subject, some symbolic representation may be substituted for 'body'. To phrase it differently: contingency itself contains symbols which the *bhakta* associates with Kṛṣṇa and in which he might sense—and mistake—the symbol for the symbolized:

Whenever I see [flowers like] the *pūvai*, the *kāyā*, the blue lotus, or the *kāvi* in blossom, my soft soul [and my] body swell-and-rejoice, taking these all to be forms of Pirāṉ.[23]

[20] 7: *yāmē aru viṉaiyōm cēyōm, eṉ ṉeñciṉār tāmē aṇukkar āy ccārntu.*

[21] 75: *puviyum iru vicumpum niṉṉ akatta; nī...pukunt' eṉṉ uḷḷāy aviv' iṉṟi.*

[22] 6: *neṟi* [acc. to comm. Aṇṇa. *~karma-, jñāna-mārga*] *kāṭṭi nīkkuti-yō niṉ pāl... mēṉi kāṭṭuti-yō ?*

[23] 73: *pūvaiyuṅ kāyāvum nīlamum pūkkiṉṟa kāvi malar eṉṟuṅ kāṇṭōṟum pāviyēṉ mell āvi mey mikavē pūrikkum avvavaiy ellām Pirāṉ uruvēy eṉṟu.* Compare already 1stAnt. 89.

The rain-cloud, the dark mountain, the dark blue ocean, compact darkness, *pūvai* flowers crowded with bees, or any dark shape—whenever my heart sees them, it leaves me behind and runs after [them], taking them to be the exalted forms of Kaṇṇaṉ.[24]

Thus the poet introduces the 'symbol' to bridge the gulf which otherwise could not be overcome, given Kṛṣṇa's nature as the Absolute. Nammāḻvār indicates this transcendence by using a spatial or temporal metaphor in a number of places: 'We are far [from you].'[25] 'He abandons [his devotees] and does not manifest himself [to them].'[26] 'We do not see [you] nowadays.'[27] 'He does not reside here in majesty as in former times.'[28] 'He does not show his form.'[29] Whether His presence was real in a mythical past or in a previous mystical experience, the present absence corresponds to Kṛṣṇa's character; after all, he is Māyaṉ, 'Lord of tricks', which from one point of view could be interpreted as ungratefulness and lack of mercy.

A cloud that lost the storm [= ceases to move] and recedes—this is indeed a truth[ful simile] for Him, who abandoned [me] and went away, back to the ocean...[30]

The load with which Kṛṣṇa impregnates the *bhakta* is passionate love of Him and in fact the longing 'to see His body'. But instead of fulfilling this desire, He vanishes—thus Nammāḻvār envisages in dynamic terms an ontological truth (viz. that the contingent subject cannot fully experience the transcendental). This dynamism is given an even stronger moral overtone in this stanza:

Alas! How can [His] mind be so cruel! He has no mercy, He does not even once pity those whose minds waver and wander about after Him, who do not divert their gaze from [Him]! He does not unite with them.[31]

[24] 49: *koṇṭal tāṉ māl varai tāṉ mā kaṭal tāṉ kūr iruḷ tāṉ vaṇṭ' aṟā ppūvai tāṉ. . .kār uruvaṅ kāṇ-ṭōṟum neñc' ōṭuṅ Kaṇṇaṉār pēr uruv' eṉṟ' emmai ppirintu.*

[25] 7: *yāmē...cēyōm.*

[26] 17: *tōṉṟātu viṭṭāl.*

[27] 28: *iṉṟē nām kāṇātu.*

[28] 30: *iṅk' illai paṇṭu pōl vīṟṟ' iruttal.*

[29] 74: *uru kāṭṭār.*

[30] 63: *kāṟṟ' iḷanta cūl koṇṭal pērntum pōy vaṉ tirai kkaṇ vant' aṇainta vāymaittē.*

[31] 50: *pirint' oṉru nōkkātu tamm uṭaiya piṉṉē tirint' uḷalum cintaṉaiyār tammai purint' oru kāl āᵛ āᵛ eṉaᵛ iraṅkār antō valitē kol...maṉam.*

Although in these stanzas no allusion is made to the *akattiṇai* material (except for the flowers listed in 73 and some of the items of 49), *de facto* we are dealing here with a mysticism of separation; but since in the following pages this point will be discussed extensively, we need not go into the details here.

As mentioned, the longing to see the absent Kṛṣṇa feeds upon the fleeting taste of 'presence' or 'union'. Naturally in this rare moment of union the symbols lose their significance or attraction, and what they symbolize alone overwhelms the mystic:

> The mountains, the ocean [surrounded by] groves, and the heavenly kingdom of Vaikuntam—O alas! like grass they disappear: He of black complexion has entered my heart and does not go away.[32]

It is most remarkable that Nammāḻvār is by no means happy about this type of experience; the 'O alas!' (*ē pāvam*) as expression of grief and pain is quite striking in the Tamil text. Our surprise may be tempered by the following poem, which appears to give us an indication of why the Āḻvār experiences even Kṛṣṇa's abiding in his heart as painful.

> By merely thinking [of you, my] soul already swells; tell me, O Form who measured the cosmos, can it really be that I too become of the expanse of the existent universe when I gaze [at you]...and unite with you bodily?[33]

Thus since Kṛṣṇa is always also the cosmic God, any experience of Him which obliterates the cosmos cannot be the fullest form of mysticism: what our poet is aiming at is a total experience of seeing Him, His body, which necessarily involves His cosmic form too. I think this attitude may most conveniently be explained as the assertion of the Tamil this-worldly attitude, which resorts to the Vedānta conception of the cosmic Viṣṇu to defend its positive approach to the world—the sphere of Kṛṣṇa's symbols.

[32] 68:*kalluṅ kaṉai kaṭalum Vaikunta vā nāṭum pull eṉr' oḻintaṉa kol ē pāvam!... niṟaṅ kariyāṉ uḷ pukuntu nīṅkāṉ aṭiyēṉat' uḷḷatt' akam.*

[33] 76: *uḷḷilum uḷḷan taṭikkum...viḻitt' uṉṉai meyy urrāl uḷḷa ulak' aḷavum yāṉum uḷaṉ āvaṉ eṉ kolō? ulak' aḷanta Mūrtti! urai!* Aṇṇa. paraphrases *uḷḷa ulaku* as 'internal universe'; if this were meant here, my pregnant interpretation would obviously lose its point. On the basis of MTL *meyy-uṟupuṇarcci* 'copulation' I have translated *meyy uru-* as 'to unite bodily'. Aṇṇa. paraphrases *viḻittu* as 'having been glanced upon by you'.

The dialectical drive of the Āḻvār's mysticism—to expand and encompass in Kṛṣṇa the whole cosmos, to withdraw into the heart and reach out for the *antaryāmī*, and at the same time to realize that the cosmos may vanish, that Kṛṣṇa may have separated from him, and that instead of 'seeing His body', only the desire to do so or the seeing of it in the symbols is possible for him as a contingent being—is complemented by a tranquil feeling of confidence and trust.

> When He desires [somebody] to become His servant, he will live [in peace] even when He does not manifest Himself and separates from him.[34]

The agonizing tensions are overcome in trust and surrender.

This may suffice as an introduction of Nammāḻvār's bhakti as found in the *Periyatiruvantâti*. The novel features—to be met again in greater detail in the following pages—do not obscure the connection with the earlier *Antâtis*. The dynamism found there in 'seeing Kṛṣṇa' (in His symbolic forms) and the 'longing to see His form' has been developed here as a comprehensive mysticism of separation. Worshipping Him by singing His praise has become in Nammāḻvār a 'praise' consisting of a dialectical struggle with the paradoxes of Kṛṣṇa's own nature and of His relationship to the *bhakta*—a struggle with His *māyā*.

Turning now to Caṭakōpaṉ's second work, the *Tiruviruttam*, we shall see how this type of 'separation mysticism' and dialectical comprehension of *māyā* is expressed in the symbolic language of the *akattiṇai*.

4.322 *The Tiruviruttam*[35]

This poem by Caṭakōpaṉ is the most idiosyncratic of all the works in the *Prabandham*. While the PTAnt contains the Āḻvār's expression of his mysticism by reference to the *Early Antâtis*, the TVir can be regarded as his exploration of *caṅkam* style for the purpose of conveying his experience. The dialectical mysticism of the PTAnt is also here the central content—in fact we find a number of

[34] 17: *aṭiyār vēṇṭiṉa kkāl tōṉrātu viṭṭālum vāḻnt' iṭuvar*.

[35] It consists of hundred stanzas in the *viruttam* metre; they show no systematic arrangement, but are held together by the *antâti* feature—a formal reference to the *Early Antâtis*.

stanzas which simply follow those of the PTAnt[36]—but most of the stanzas resort to *akattiṇai* style, or at least symbolism, for poetic expression. Thus the main theme is 'separation'. Since the variety of poetic styles is much greater here than in either the strict *akattiṇai* or the 'girl poems' of the TVM, we can focus our attention on the more idiosyncratic poems, while briefly pointing out the *caṅkam* roots.

In the PTAnt, 'praise' figures as the frame holding the various stanzas together; here it is '*viṇṇappam*',[37] 'communication' (or: 'request'). Whatever the connotation, 'viṇṇappam' provides a definite frame of reference for the various poems encased by it: the stanzas are part of a 'communication' between the Āḻvār and Kṛṣṇa, and the interpretation has to take this into account.[38] Formally, we can say that the *akattiṇai* style is the 'sign system' chosen here for the 'communication', and that thus the symbolic structure of poetry 'denotes' a religious content. The Āḻvār tells us moreover that to 'compose poems' is 'our *param*'[39] which probably means 'highest task' or 'fulfilment'; and again we encounter his dialectical awareness: '. . . the poetry of Tirumāl whose design it is to speak about Himself through me.'[40] This means that the ultimate rationale for the Āḻvār's poetry lies outside the Āḻvār himself—he is an instrument, fulfilling his 'highest task' by letting

[36] E.g., the 'framing stanzas' 1 and 96-100; also 48, 51, 64, 94.

[37] Skt. *vijñāpana* means 'information, communication, address (to a superior), request'. In Prakrit (Turner, Nos. 11,705f) we find the verb *viṇṇăvei* (Pali *viññāpeti*) 'informs, appeals to, regards', and the noun *viṇṇatti* 'information, report, request'. The Tamil *viṇṇappam* is derived from a Prakritic **viṇṇāpana/viṇṇappana*. According to the MTL, only 'petition, supplication' (*ad locum*) of the Skt./Pkt. meanings occur. Thus it is difficult to say to what extent the other meaning, 'information, communication' can be assumed to be still functioning with Nammāḻvār. However, by 'informing' Māyōṉ about his suffering, the Āḻvār at the same time makes a 'request', viz. to have mercy and remove his pain. 1: *aṭiyēṉ ceyyum vi.* '(listen) to the *vi.* which I, a sinner, am making; 100: *Māṟaṉ vi. ceyta coll* 'the words of Māran made in the form of a *vi.*'.

[38] When analysing the poems of the *Kalittokai* which are very similar in structure to those of the TVir, it was precisely the lack of such a definite *religious* context which made the interpretation so ambiguous.

[39] 61: *vācakañ ceyvatu nam paramē*. According to the MTL *param* is (1) < Skt. *para-* 'what is excellent; heaven; final bliss; *mokṣa*; completeness, fulness', and (2) < Skt. *bhara* 'burden'; but compare Skt. *bhāra* 'work, labour, task', which is the sense used by Aṇṇa.: *kaṭavatu* 'task'.

[40] 48: *ennālun tannai colliya cūḻal Tirumālavaṉ*. Compare TVM VII, 9.

Māl speak through him and 'communicate' Himself. In other words, the stanzas combine a statement by the Āḻvār and by Māl.

Obviously the *caṅkam* style is most congenial to this, since its rule of anonymity eliminates a specific speaker.[41] It contains a symbolic structure, the 'landscape' 'denoting' or 'symbolizing' particular emotional situations, so that by its very nature it mirrors the symbolic character of the 'communication' as the sign system of the Āḻvār's (and again, through him, of Māl's) expression.

But that is not all: the dialectic occurs again on the plane of the poems' content. This may be illustrated by stanza 55 in which 'the lover' addresses bees[42]:

> I must ask you something, bees! Is there anywhere *on your*[43] *broad earth* a flower filled with pollen and spreading fragrance, that could be compared to the fragrance of the hair of [this] girl who resembles *the heaven of Vaikuntam* [which belongs to] Him who as a boar danced *in the dust of the earth*?[44]

The dialectic expressed here is between *earth* and *heaven*: the bee knows the flowers of the earth, the girl is more beautiful than all of them—her beauty transcends them—and resembles heaven, and the lord of Vaikuntam descended and danced in the dust of the earth. 'Beauty' here is the connecting element, and structurally it is the metaphor, '*resembles* the heaven of Vaikuntam'. The girl's beauty is the symbol which points at divine beauty, and it is in such symbols (of which the metaphors or similes are the linguistic correspondences) that the Āḻvār communicates; at the same time, only by 'dancing in the dust of the earth' is the symbolic presence of beauty made possible.

After these abstract observations we may now turn to the actual poetry. Since most of the stanzas follow the same basic structure, it will be sufficient to analyse in detail only one stanza:

[41] More precisely, the poet is not allowed to make any of the *dramatis personae* represent himself; this means, e.g., the hero is not the poet himself. See 4.2, note 125.

[42] The source for the poem is *Kuṟu.* 2; but the crucial phrases 'on your earth', 'heaven of Vaikuntam', and 'danced in the dust of the earth' are Nammāḻvār's additions.

[43] i.e., the earth which you know from hovering around in search of pollen.

[44] From here onwards I shall not quote the Tamil text of poems translated from the *Prabandham* when dealing simply with poetic material; to do so would have increased the bulk of the footnotes quite considerably. In most cases, only part of a stanza is translated, but this has not been indicated in the text.

O you skilled [charioteer]! Please drive our chariot quickly, that the black beauty of her with the brilliant forehead may not change into yellow.[45]

Turn now towards that black mountain from which waterfalls run down that look like garlands of white pearls [hanging from] the tall head of the First Lord of the Heavens.[46]

We are dealing here with a poem in strict *akattiṇai* style. The 'landscape' is *mullai*, indicated by the *karus* Māyōn̲ (= First Lord of Heaven) and rainy season (= waterfalls). Correspondingly, the *uri* is 'waiting in separation', suggested here by the girl's change of colour. Into this is woven a *kuṟiñci* theme, suggested by the 'mountain': as the goal of the man's journey home it symbolizes at the same time the object of his emotional desire, viz. to be united with his beloved. The rushing down of the waterfalls alludes—via *uḷḷuṟai-uvamai*—to the speed of the chariot and again to the intensity of the man's longing.

Taken out of its context, this stanza could be regarded as nothing more than a '*caṅkam*' poem (except for the metre and perhaps one or two minor details). But the context compels us to go further. We may first look at Hooper's interpretation, which will tell us how *not* to proceed. He speaks of 'the generally-accepted esoteric meaning of recurring symbols', according to which 'the *bridegroom* is God, and the company of God-loved souls'.[47] *Ad* the present stanza, he adds a third meaning to 'bridegroom': '*Friends* seeing the Āl̲vār's despondency speak to their own minds ('car of the mind', imagination) to hasten to cheer him.'[48] Thus 'bridegroom' ≙ God, or ≙ soul, or ≙ Āl̲vār's friend/devotee, a strange and confusing allegory indeed, in which every symbol can mean everything! Hooper's interpretation is not original, but he derives it from the commentators[49] who like himself are unaware of the

[45] According to classical Tamil taste, a 'black' complexion is the most beautiful for a girl. Poetry tells us that due to emotional stress, this 'black' changes to 'yellow' or 'gold'. Thus 'golden complexion' indicates that the girl is in a very pitiable condition.

[46] Stanza 50. For a similar theme see e.g. *Akan*. 384. A comparison of the mountain to Kṛṣṇa is implied.

[47] 1929, p. 60.

[48] Ibid., p. 75. Note the artificial *manoratha* → *ratha* 'car' in Hooper's attempt to render the poetic imagery pregnant. Similarly, *ad* 14 (p. 64) and 75 (p. 82) he takes 'lord' to mean 'Āl̲vār's devotees'.

[49] See 4.1 note 8, and 4.24 note 103.

caṅkam poetry which alone can provide the basis for a serious interpretation. How then can we interpret the poem?

I have said that the Āḻvār employs for his *viṇṇappam* a symbolic system, the 'signifiant' of which is clearly a *caṅkam*-style poem. This means then, that the content of the *viṇṇappam*, its 'signifié', must be what any *caṅkam*-style poem expresses *as a whole*. In the absence of a formulated indigenous theory concerning the mechanism and aim of *caṅkam* poetry,[50] I may be allowed to paraphrase these as follows: it conveys to the audience an emotional situation, rendering it an object for their sympathetic participation and aesthetic enjoyment.

This agrees well with the connotations of *viṇṇappam*: by means of the poem, the Āḻvār communicates an emotion, placing it before Māyōṉ as a 'request' and 'supplication', as an appeal for 'sympathy' and as object of enjoyment (= praise). But we must go further and say that from another point of view Kṛṣṇa himself speaks through the Āḻvār, 'communicating' that same emotion which is contained in the poem. Taking both aspects together we can say, that the Āḻvār communicates an emotion which in his awareness Māyōṉ communicates to him, and thus *the emotion concerned is the mode in which the Āḻvār experiences Māyōṉ in himself*, the poem being the container of that emotion.

When we turn back to the formal structure of stanza 50, we recognize now that our initial definition of Māyōṉ as *karu* is not sufficient. The 'First Lord of Heaven' figures in a *simile*; I mentioned above that the simile is with Nammāḻvār the linguistic correspondent to a general religious symbolic structure or dialectic. Thus by comparing the mountain of the poetic landscape to Māl, the poet expresses *formaliter* the same as he does in his *viṇṇappam*: just as the 'landscape' points at Māyōṉ, the emotions conveyed by the poems refer to him. Both 'natural' and 'poetic' landscapes open out into a transcendental landscape, the *dramatis personae* act out an emotional relationship which is symbol of Māyōṉ 'who danced in the dust of the earth'. We may summarize all this in the formula (he:she)⟷Māyōṉ. This reads: the emotional relation-

[50] By this I mean something comparable to Ānandavardhana's *rasa*-theory for Skt. poetry. It is beyond our present scope to enter into a discussion about a more universal relevance of this system, nor is it possible here to investigate the authenticity of the *rasa*-theory as it appears in the *Tolk*. (III 249-275, *meyppāṭu*) or its appropriateness for *caṅkam* poetry.

ship between the (poetic) man and woman (1) points at Māyōn, (2) is made the content of the Āḻvār's 'communication', and (3) constitutes what Māyōn 'speaks' in the Āḻvār. Neither 'he' nor 'she' by themselves refer to the Āḻvār or Māyōn. Thus the god is not just a *karu*[51], he is now the central plane of the poem itself, to which the planes of the physical landscape and of the emotional situation are made subordinate.

Having established the abstract structure of analysis for the great majority of stanzas contained in the TVir, we may now turn to a brief discussion of the range of content 'communicated'—in other words, the emotional range expressed. We notice immediately that 'separation' is by far the most common theme, and the *mullai tiṇai* is probably more frequent than the other four *tiṇais* taken together.[52] In other words, for the first time in the Tamil sources, *mullai* ~ separation is consistently correlated to Māyōn, and that again by treating Māyōn not just as a *karu*, but as the transcendental god of the mystic. We have here a very close parallel for the synthesis achieved for 'Murukan' in *Paripāṭal* VIII. By preparation of the *Early* and the *Periya-Antâtis*, Māyōn as a poetic symbol suggesting 'separation', and as the object of mysticism which is experienced as causing unfulfilled longing, viz. 'separation', have merged.[53]

Unlike the TVM, the TVir also contains a few stanzas of the *kuṟiñci tiṇai*; I shall quote one example, which at the same time may illustrate how deep the roots of Nammāḻvār's poetry lie in the classical *caṅkam* tradition.[54] The poetic setting is the following: young girls on a platform are guarding a millet field from birds and other animals. A young man passes by, sees the girls and tries to flatter them:

O girls! Is this a [real] millet field that you are guarding [on the platform]?
Or is it the [confused] mind of mine—a great sinner passing by the field?

[51] Even in classical style, such a reference to Māyōn could be interpreted as 'flattery of a patron' or as 'dedication'; but in view of the Āḻvār's intensely religious inspiration, all this is not sufficient to explain the full significance of the TVir.

[52] This calculation is only approximate; to make it more precise is difficult, since the *tiṇai* cannot always be specified.

[53] I postpone a more detailed discussion (see 4.325 and 4.432). The problem involved here is just how to assess the impact of the *akattiṇai* ideology upon the Āḻvār's religious awareness.

[54] Significantly left untranslated by Hooper.

Tell me! You resemble the host of divine girls who dwell in the kingdom of heaven of Kaṇṇaṉ with eyes like lotuses. Is that your real nature?[55]

Here again we encounter the theme of beauty, which not only fascinates and enraptures the boy, but which also, in his own words, points to Kṛṣṇa's heavenly beauty.

But such pleasant notes of sensuous and sensual fascination are rare with Caṭakōpaṉ; more typical of the sentiments which the Āḻvār tries to convey is the following stanza:

The king with the fiery mouth has set; darkness that makes one shiver is now enthroned with royal power all over the world. Who will henceforth protect my bangles by warding off the icy north wind which throws the *tulsī* upon my love which increases my pain? These age-long [nights] cut me to pieces.[57]

The early night after sunset and the cold north wind are *mullai karus*, like Māyōṉ (alluded to by *tulsī*). Thus the girl is 'cut to pieces' by the absence of her lover. The darkness of the night and the fragrance of the flowers heighten her agony. She has become emaciated, and the bangles slip off her thin wrists. 'To protect them' means to remove the cause of her emaciation, and that is to bring her lover back.

There is one detail in the poem which cannot be derived from *caṅkam* poetry: the *tulsī* flower. A closer look at the stanzas of the TVir reveals that such unconventional details occur in a number of them; apart from the *tulsī*, we find the Bird which is manifestly Garuḍa, Kṛṣṇa's vehicle, and the 'sceptre of righteousness'.[58] This feature could be described as superimposition of a new symbolism, a new *karu* system, upon the traditional poetic repertoire.

[55] No. 23; TKō *ad* 2 calls the *tuṟai diyam* 'doubt'. In the previous stanza 22 the boy enquires after an elephant he claims to have wounded. See TKō 52 for this theme belonging to the same setting, also *Kuṟi.* 35-151. Skanda mythology too has integrated the theme: see Gros, 1968, p. xlviii; Dessigane/Pattabiramin, *La légende de Skanda* (*selon le Kantapurāṇam tamoul et l'iconographie*), Pondicherry, 1967 (Publications de l'Institut Français d'Indologie, No. 31) Book VI, 24, 121-46 (= p. 224) and *planche* xxii, 2 (left), xxiii and xxiv.

[56] Māyōṉ instead of Murukaṉ in *kuṟiñci* is non-classical, but obviously the poet had no place for the Śaivite god.

[57] Stanza 13. Compare the longer version TVM V, 4.

[58] They normally occur with two conventional *motifs*, the north wind and the dark night. In the first third of the TVir, we find the following distribution:

But along with this, we can also detect a tendency to relate the lover to Māyōn̲ himself, which is made possible by the ambiguity of these symbols. In the last poem, it would be through the *uḷḷuṟai-uvamai* that the *tulsī* 'causes pain' because it brings Kṛṣṇa as the lover of the girl *symbolically* to her. More obvious is the following poem:

> The mother speaks: 'Even at the time when clouds climb up the sky, turn black and [roar] in challenge: "Who then among women will keep her virtue!" He who rides on the Bird, the god with the cooling lovely *tulsī*, feels no compassion for her, does not call her. This village is filled with the gossip about my girl of few words.'[59]

Conventionally, this would mean that the lover has not returned by the beginning of the rainy season, and that even Kṛṣṇa has no mercy on the girl since he 'does not call her', viz. terminate her suffering by letting her die. But the general context, and the unconventional *karus*, *tulsī* and Bird, along with the linguistic syntactical ambiguity, suggest that the lover *is* Kṛṣṇa.[60] This may be formalized as: (she : he→Māyōn̲) ↔ Māyōn̲.[61] This corresponds to the 'girl-poems' of the TVM (though these are of a slightly simpler structure).

Table XVII

tulsi	3	4	5		12	13	19	20		24	25	27	28	
Garuḍa	3	4		6			19		22	24			28	
scepter			5	6		13					25	27		33
north wind		4	5			13						27	28	
dark night					12	13								

[59] Stanza 19. 'Few words': she keeps quiet about the cause of her pain; 'challenge': since she will be without her lover or husband during the 'season of lovemaking' she may yield to other men's entreaties.

[60] On the other hand, no approximation of the 'she' to the Āl̲vār is indicated. At the most we can link a phrase like '(Kṛṣṇa) feels no compassion for her' with a phrase like '(Kṛṣṇa) has no mercy' in PTAnt 50, and we could say that the girl here experiences something similar to the Āl̲vār in his mysticism. But we must not forget that 'he' and 'Māyōn̲' are not just identified.

[61] In some stanzas of the TVir, the structure comes closer to she: Māyōn̲, which means, the poetic conceit becomes so thin that we can directly identify the lover with Māyōn̲.

The following poem is an example of another, rare superimposition of a new symbolism upon the conventional *caṅkam* style.

He speaks: 'O (girl) resembling gold! You have now crossed the desert—the sun had taken the earth into his mouth, chewed it until its juice had been sucked up, and finding the remainder tasteless, spat it out again, this is the desert–: there is Veḫkā of Kaṇṇaṉ, where gods fall on the ground and worship Him. Luscious groves with the honey of fine flowers surround it—the relief after all deserts.'[62]

This is a typical *pālai* poem; a couple has eloped across the desert and after an exhausting journey they reach a town, which the man points out to the girl. But it is not an anonymous and typified, a poetical town: it is Kṛṣṇa's temple in Kāñcīpuram.[63] What is interesting here is that we recognize the beginning of a new 'landscape' (fully developed in the TVM as the 'temple-landscape'), since the poetical *tiṇai* is being transformed into a landscape—still poetically conceived of—filled with the Vaiṣṇava temples of South India.

These few observations may suffice as a general characterization of the TVir and as an introduction to the TVM. The most important points found here are that the Ālvār, by experimenting with *caṅkam* poetry, establishes a *second level of emotional bhakti*, viz. the poetical,[64] and that this type of poetry, contrived according to the *akattiṇai*, aims at the 'communication' of *emotions*,[65] particularly that of 'separation'. We have here the basis for various genres which occur in the TVM, and we need not enter into a detailed

[62] Stanza 26. On Veḫkā see 3.31, Nos. 3 and 4. The mention of 'gold' most likely means (see note 45 above) that the girl is in a state of emotional stress. The TKō calls the *tuṟai nakar-kāṭṭal* 'to point out the town' (No. 222, also 221).

[63] I think it is significant for the Āḻvār's geographical awareness that it is the northern Veḫkā which lies beyond a long journey through the 'desert'. A look at Map 3 will corroborate this.

[64] See 1.2 for the three levels on which the psychological states of bhakti can occur. For 'contrived' (or 'plot level') see 4.243.2.

[65] As stated above (note 50), it is not possible to provide an exhaustive and integral theory of the aesthetics of *caṅkam* poetry. Thus, to say that a poem is designed to convey 'emotions' may not exhaust its functions. But it would complicate matters too much if we wanted to investigate whether besides the emotions the Āḻvār wants to convey in his *viṇṇappam* also some circumstantial content. However, below in discussing the TVM, such questions cannot altogether be avoided.

discussion of them at this stage. But two points must be kept in mind: firstly, the poetical structure, in spite of the bhakti context, leaves the 'she' intact; it cannot be reduced simply to a fanciful symbol of the Āḻvār, because this would destroy the poetic structure; secondly, the content of a poem is always also the modality of Māyōṉ's presence in the Āḻvār; we shall see in the discussion of the TVM how this can be reconciled with 'separation'.

4.323 *A note on Māṇikkavācakar's* Tirukkōvaiyār

The Śaivite *Tirumuṟai* contains, besides the well-known *Tiruvācakam*, another work ascribed to Māṇikkavācakar, viz. the *Tirukkōvaiyār*.[66] In consists of 400 poems, which cover in a systematic manner an equal number of *tuṟais*, amorous situations, beginning with the very first encounter of lovers and concluding with 'separation on account of a prostitute.'[67] The poetic style is that of the *akattiṇai*, but in all stanzas Śiva is referred to (in similes, etc., like Māyōṉ in the TVir), usually as the lord of Tillai (=Cidambaram). A stanza[68] chosen at random may illustrate the character of this work.

The lover speaks: 'O you girls with precious armlets, a white smile, and very beautiful with your waists thin as lightnings! You resemble Ampalam (=Cidambaram) of Him who resides there, and who has the gentle lady (=Umā)—with spear-eyes and bright brows like bows—as half of his beautiful body. Would these fine leaves of sapphire colour be fitting for your Venus-mount of golden hue?'[69]

The commentators correctly point out various allusions and suggestions; the boy conveys his real intention to the girl he loves by referring to the physical union of Śiva and Umā (*Ardhanārêśvara*), and also by the colour-contrast of the yellowish Venus-mount and the sapphire leaves. But again, the general context of

[66] A *kōvai* is a collection of poems systematically arranged according to subject matter and poetic conventions (*tuṟais*). Gros, 1968, p. xxxi, note 2 remarks: '. . .nous en avons une traduction en préparation', which seems to be still unpublished.

[67] Nos. 352-400: *parattaiyiṉ pirivu.*

[68] Stanza 58. We have here again the theme of the leaf-skirt (also TVir 23), for which see *Akan.* 59.

[69] *Viṉ niṟa vā ṇutal vē niṟa kkaṇ mell iyalai mallal/taṉ niṟam onṟil irutti niṉṟōṉ raṉat'Ampalam pōl/miṉṉiṟa nuṇṇ iṭai ppēr elil veṇṇakai ppain toṭiyīr!/poṉniṟa alkulukk' āmō maṇi niṟa ppūm taḻaiyē?*

such a stanza compels us to attribute a religious significance to the *simile* involving Śiva: the beauty of the girls points to the beauty of Śiva and his temple, and in view of my analysis of the TVir, it appears justified further to say that the whole poem, its emotional content, is made to refer to Śiva. Thus we have again the formula (she:he) → Śiva. But like Nammāḻvār's erotic poems, the TKō had to suffer an allegorical interpretation by the commentators, only that here the soul is supposed to be symbolized by the *man*, and Śiva by the *girl*.[70] I think it does not require further proof to show that such an approach violates the whole nature of this poetry. I cannot enter here into a discussion of Māṇikkavācakar's date; but I assume that Nammāḻvār must be earlier by a few centuries or so, and thus also must have been the source from which Māṇikkavācakar drew his inspiration. The high complexity of the poetic style, with its endless allusions, suggestions, double meanings, etc., and the systematic arrangement (and the much more stereotyped structure of all the stanzas) indicate a much greater distance from the *caṅkam* tradition than need be assumed for the TVir, and belong to an altogether new period of Tamil literature.

4.324 *The Tiruvāymoḻi*[71]

We can turn now to Nammāḻvār's *magnum opus*, in which features typical of the TVir and PTAnt are combined, and which at the same time is the most important work in the *Prabandham*. Like the poet's other two works, the TVM shows only a formal arrangement of the individual songs through the *antâti*, and I have chosen to order my discussion by basing it upon another formal principle, viz. that of poetic genres. I shall begin with an analysis of the general theological frame within which the Āḻvār has envisaged his utterances, and turn then to a very brief and selective discussion

[70] Such an interpretation is still repeated, e.g., by Zvelebil, 1973, p. 198, note 1 (see 4.24, note 91).

[71] The title is clearly revolutionary (although presumably not original to the Āḻvār), for *vāymoḻi* means 'Vedas' (see Gros, p. 171 above for the usage of the word in the *Paripāṭal*). Śrīvaiṣṇava tradition mollifies this somewhat by speaking of the '*Tamil* Veda' or '*Tamil* Upaniṣad' (*dramiḍôpaniṣad*). The hundred songs are self-contained and stand in no logical order, but the commentaries and medieval summaries attempt to impose some systematic arrangement on the songs, which is misleading; see Das Gupta, 1940, pp. 69-74 who utilizes the verse-summary *Dramiḍôpaniṣattātparya*.

of songs in which direct statements are made about the nature of bhakti. Thirdly, I shall summarize and discuss a fairly large group of songs in which symbolic language is employed, or to use my own terminology,[72] in which bhakti is expressed in a poetic frame or setting—in other words, the 'girl poems'. Fourthly, there are three songs with a mythical setting, '*gopī* poems' which are discussed separately. I shall conclude with a brief general evaluation.[73]

(1) *Aesthetics and theology* Already for TVir 1 and 100, the outlines of a theory of bhakti poetry have been indicated; in TVM VII, 9 we find further details of it.[74] The key idea here is that Kṛṣṇa uses the poet as an instrument to speak about himself, which means that the Āḻvār's poetry is 'inspired' and contains Kṛṣṇa's 'revelation' about himself. Caṭakōpaṉ says 'the lord who sings in sweet Tamil about Himself by means of me',[75] an idea repeated throughout the song. Both agent and content of the Āḻvār's singing is Kṛṣṇa, and even the form is determined by Him: 'sweet Tamil poetry'.[76] But the act of singing stands within a much larger context; Māyōṉ is the agent of the Āḻvār's speaking because he is his 'life',[77] the agent underlying the Āḻvār's whole existence; the Āḻvār has become in his being Kṛṣṇa's instrument: 'He made me His own.'[78] Thus acts like 'singing' or composing poetry are secondary expressions of the primary truth that Māyōṉ is the dynamism, 'the life' or 'the soul', underlying the Āḻvār's existence. This awareness, on the other hand, must not be mistaken for *advaita*, since the Āḻvār by no means loses his contingent individuality. He still speaks about Māyōṉ as an object, e.g.,

[72] For an explanation see above p. 279.

[73] The same arrangement has been employed in 4.331, PTM, in order to facilitate the comparison.

[74] TVir 48 contains the idea *in nucleo*. Incidentally, many stanzas in the TVir can be regarded as short versions of songs in the TVM which deal with similar subject matter. But to establish a total correspondence between all hundred stanzas and hundred songs (found e.g. in the edition of the *Prabandham* by Kōpālācāriyār) is fairly artificial.

[75] 1: *eṉṉāl taṉṉai iṉ tamiḻ pāṭiyaṿ īcaṉ*.

[76] 1: *iṉ tamiḻ*; *tamiḻ* 'sweet' = *iṉ* 'sweet': *iṉ kaṿi* 'sweet (-Tamil) poetry', 2f, 5, 8-10.

[77] 10: *eṉṉ uyir*; 1, 4: *uyya kkoṇṭu*.

[78] 1, 5, 8f: *eṉṉai ttaṉṉ ākki*.

'seeing His greatness',[79] and even reverses the 'possessive relationship': 'He became my own'.[80] We are therefore back at the key-structure of dialectics: Māyōṉ is the underlying *subject* of the Āḻvār's existence, and at the same time the *object* of his perception and communication; moreover, the symbolic structure of the poem contains Him.[81]

If now from one point of view Māyōṉ is the actual speaker of the poetry, one may ask to whom He addresses His words. The poet says: 'He entered into my tongue . . . and speaks about Himself to the *bhaktas*.'[82] In other words, the Āḻvār is aware that this 'transcendental communication' has a *social* dimension. The songs are thus the vehicle by means of which Kṛṣṇa communicates Himself to the *bhaktas*. Furthermore, these *bhaktas* appear in *history*. 'He did not cause the excellent poets who sing sweet songs to sing His poetry about Himself.'[83] One way of interpreting this is to say that simply due to the Āḻvār's lack of native talent[84] Kṛṣṇa had to take over; but obviously this implies also that here in the Āḻvār's poetry for the first time 'inspiration' takes place. It is difficult to say whom Caṭakōpaṉ has in mind here as 'excellent poets'; the commentators suggest both the Early Āḻvārs and the Sanskrit poets Vyāsa, Parāśara, Vālmiki. However this may be, in the Āḻvār's awareness divine communication has also a *historical* dimension.

I think we have obtained here the appropriate general context within which to evaluate the Āḻvār's songs: they contain both what Nammāḻvār experiences about Māyōṉ and what Māyōṉ expresses about Himself.

(2) *General statements about bhakti*[85] TVM I, 2 is a good example

[79] 5: *cīr kaṇṭu koṇṭu*; 9: *cīr parukilum* 'even when I relish His greatness'.

[80] 4: *enṉ ākiyē*.

[81] In the scholastic language of the commentaries (*ad locum*) this is expressed by saying that Kṛṣṇa is (a) the *prayōjakaṉ*, the *karttā*, or the *pāṭiṉāṉ* (singer) and (b) the *viṣayam*, or the *pratipātyaṉ* (he who has to be stated). See vol. VII, pp. 355 and 357 of the *Pakavatviṣayam*. The songs themselves are characterized there as: 'similar to Himself' (*satruśam*), 'corresponding to Himself' (*takutiyāṉa*), 'of/about Himself' (*taṉṉatu*), or 'containing Himself' (*taṉṉ uṭaitt' āṉa*).

[82] 3: *eṉ nā . . . pukuntu . . . pattarkku ttāṉ raṉṉai coṉṉa*.

[83] 6: *iṉ kavi pāṭum parama kavikaḷāl taṉ kavi tāṉ taṉṉai ppāṭuviyātu*.

[84] As he says in stanza 5: 'since I have no talent for speaking' (*collum nīrmai ilāmaiyil*).

[85] I discuss here no more than a few songs selected at random; there is obviously a great deal of material to be found in the TVM on this topic.

of the development from the traditional forms of bhakti to its emotional expression. The songs start on the lines of the *Gītā*. 'Give up everything and offer it [to Him]!' (1) 'Destroy with their roots what is called "you" and "yours", and dedicate it to the Lord!' (3) 'Cut off all [other] attachments and embrace Him alone!' (4)[86] This is the *ananyabhakti* and the *karmasamarpana* of the *Gītā*.[87] But 'without attachment [to anything else] submit to Him in everything' (6) leads into a spirituality typical of the Early Āḻvārs: 'Let the thought that all is the beauty of the Lord be in you' (7), 'let all three, heart, word and deed, rest in the Lord.' (8)[88]

Another song, TVM V, 2, describes a more ecstatic bhakti:

Victory! Victory! Victory!
The painful curse so cruel against the soul has vanished.
Hell and suffering have faded away:
Yama lost all his claims here.
The *Kali* age has disappeared—look yourself:
The subjects of Kṛṣṇa
increase in numbers all over the earth,
and sing with music, dance, moving from place to place.
We have seen [them]. (1)[89]

A new eon has begun, the *kali yuga* has come to an end (1, 3, 10); the cosmic cycle returns to the Golden Age, the *kṛta–yuga* (3). The new religion, emotional Kṛṣṇa bhakti, catches on like fire and groups of *bhaktas* spread all over the earth (1-3, 5f, etc.) Their bhakti includes: singing to music (1-4, 6, 8), dancing (1f, 4, 6), performing *nāṭakas* (4), wandering from place to place (1f), lying down, sitting, and rising up (4),[90] loving and worshipping Acyuta

[86] *vīṭumiṉ muṟṟavum . . . vīṭu ceymmiṉē/nīr numat' eṉṟ' ivai vēr mutal māyttu iṟai cērmiṉ/pulku paṟṟ' aṟṟē*. The MTL (*ad locum*) says: *vīṭu-cey* 1) to renounce, relinquish 2) to surrender, as to God.

[87] See above 1.424, pp.

[88] *Paṟṟ' ilaiʸ āy avaṉ muṟṟil aṭaṅkē (6) īcaṉ aṭaṅk'eḻil aḫt' eṉru aṭaṅkukaᵛ uḷḷē (7) uḷḷam urai ceyal uḷḷaᵛ immūṉṟaiyum . . . iṟaiʸ uḷḷil oṭuṅkē (8).*
For *muṟṟil aṭaṅkē* in 6 Aṇṇa. says: (*sakala-kaiṅkarya*) *ṅkaḷil.*

[89] *polika polika polika pōyiṟṟu vall uyir ccāpam naliyum narakamum nainta Nama-ṉukk' iṅku yāt' oṉṟum illai kaliyum keṭum kaṇṭu koṇmiṉ kaṭal-vaṇṇaṉ pūtaṅkaḷ maṇ mēl maliya ppukuṇṭ' icai pāṭiʸ āṭiʸ uḻi tara kkaṇṭōm.* Compare 1stAnt 87.

[90] *Kiṭantum iruntum eluntum*: a loaded phrase; on the basis of TVM VI, 9, 3 or the Early Āḻvārs (see p. 298 with note 129) these three postures correspond a) to

with flowers, incense, lamps, sandal paste, and holy water (9). Here we find the social setting for the Āḻvār's own songs: presumably they are sung by these crowds of enraptured *bhaktas*.

But bhakti has as its central setting the temple. In stanza 9 we have encountered a list of utensils typical of temple worship. The fifth stanza of another song, TVM V, 8, illustrates how this worship is now linked with 'emotionalism':

I weep and worship you.
I dance and gaze at you.
I sing and strain my tongue.
O you who recline in Kuṭantai!
Please design a way by which I
—who worship you—can approach your feet.[91]

Thus besides 'songs', the temple-god also stimulates the ecstatic outburst of emotions, the 'weeping, dancing, singing'. In fact, both poetry and temple icon are closely related to each other: both are *symbolic systems* of Māyōṉ. In so far as Māyōṉ 'himself' speaks or 'reclines' in the temple, ecstasy is the direct expression of His presence; but at the same time, the symbolized always transcends the symbol: though 'gazing at him', the Āḻvār begs 'think how I can come close to you', just as he is aware of himself as the author of the songs.

A further stimulus of the same paradox must be mentioned, viz. myth. In TVM VI, 9, 2 Nammāḻvār prays:

O Lord of *māyam*! You became a dwarf, and to the delight of heaven and earth you displayed your might by taking possession of heaven and earth. Walk [again] one day through this world and unite with me, so that I—uniting with you—can see you with rapture and dance a dance of joy![92]

Viṣṇu's presence in the temples and b) in the heart of his *bhaktas*. Thus even externally they imitate the mode of his manifestations. Moreover, I wonder whether the phrase may not also imply 'they fall to the ground (unconscious), sit up (=come to), and rise again', or in other words, some form of frenzied dancing.

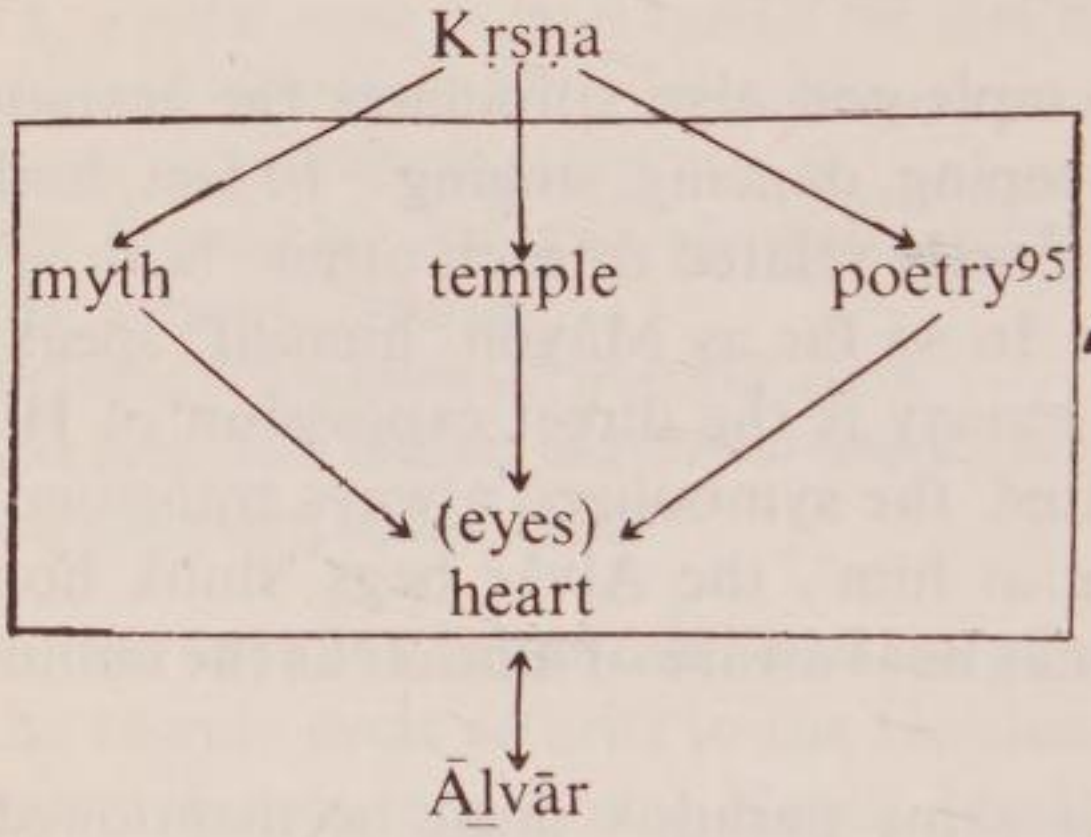
91 *Aḻuvaṉ toḻuvaṉ āṭi_kkāṇpaṉ pāṭiᵛ alaṟṟuvaṉ . . . Kuṭantai kkiṭantāy! . . . toḻuvaṉēṉaiᵛ uṉa tāḷ cērum vakaiyē cūḻ kaṇṭāy.*

92 *Maṇṇum viṇṇum makiḻa kkuṟaḷ āy valaṅ kāṭṭi*
maṇṇum viṇṇum koṇṭa māyaᵛ ammāṉē
naṇṇiᵛ uṉai nāṉ kaṇṭ' ukantu kūtt' āṭa
naṇṇiᵛ oru nāḷ ñālatt' ūṭē naṭavāyē!

The mystical descent into the Āḻvār's heart, stimulating rapture, joy, and dance, has its archetype in the mythical descent[93] of Viṣṇu (here: that of Vāmana).[94] But in both cases the 'descent' participates in the nature of the other symbols, to be subject to time and space and matter, and only to be overcome in a transcending ascent which leaves the symbol behind as an empty shell—descent and ascent as the movement of *māyā*.

On the basis of these brief remarks a preliminary structure may be delineated. We have to distinguish two situations which I call here the 'objective' and the 'mystical'. In the objective case, we can clearly distinguish the following factors:

TABLE XVIII



Locale of bhakti, and at the same time objective content of Nammāḻvār's songs.

In this situation, Kṛṣṇa as the absolute God transcends his various symbolic presences, and figures as an objective entity outside the Āḻvār, who employs poetic language to speak about Kṛṣṇa and his manifestations. Bhakti here is the whole complex that aims at reaching out to Kṛṣṇa. The 'mystical situation' evades graphic representation, since all arrows converge on zero and Kṛṣṇa merges not only with the three types of symbols, but also 'unites' with the Āḻvār who has 'become His' and ceases to act as an independent agent.[96] Now the songs *are* Kṛṣṇa, just as bhakti is

[93] For a more extensive discussion of myth in Nammāḻvār's bhakti see below 4.324.4.

[94] Compare TVir 55 'the boar who danced in the dust of the earth'.

[95] In so far as used in general by the *bhaktas*.

[96] It must be noted that the whole construction refers *only* to emotionalism. E.g., Kṛṣṇa as the *antaryāmī*, or as the Āḻvär's 'life' or 'soul', belongs to *ontology* and not to emotional dialectics.

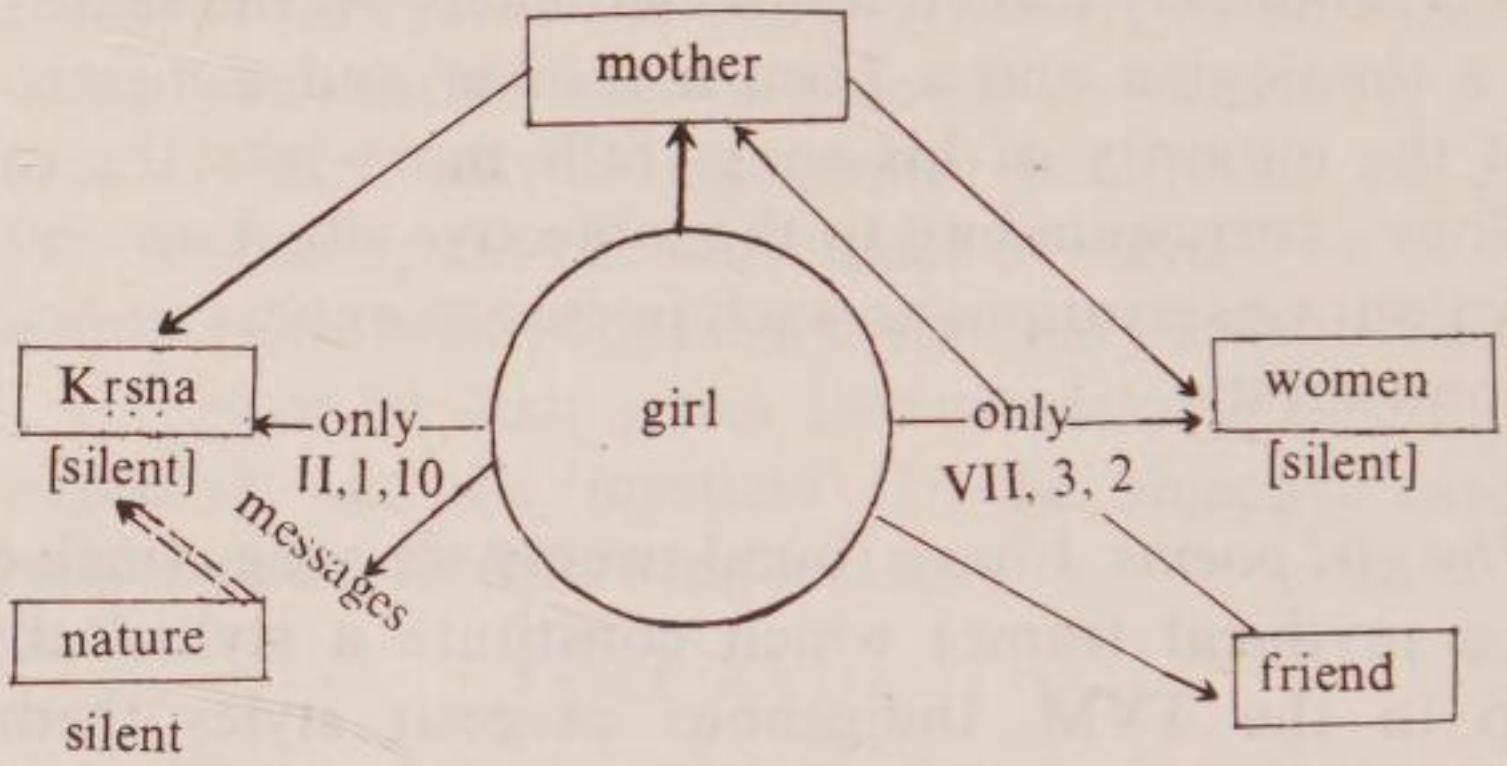
no longer a means, but a state of being.[97] Already above I have spoken of the Āḻvār's 'torn personality' and have said that the never-ending dialectical movement of his thoughts and his emotional states is ultimately rooted in his character. At the same time, he is both a theologian and a poet, a thinker and a mystic. Without doubt the majority of his songs falls more into the category of 'theology', corresponding to the 'objective situation', but we shall restrict our observations to such poems as appear to belong to the poet and mystic.

(3) *The girl poems* I have found twenty-six songs (including three with a mythical frame) which constitute a stylistically distinct group in the TVM. Indigenous exegesis styles them *nāyaka-nāyikā-bhāva* songs, viz. treating the erotic sentiments of a lover and his beloved. Their ultimate inspiration derives from the *akattiṇai*, and we could therefore style them also 'poems in the *caṅkam* style'. But in my discussion of the TVir I have pointed out certain genres in which the Āḻvār transcends those strict *caṅkam* conventions; to avoid confusion I shall therefore speak of 'girl poems'. The basic situation is the same in all the songs: a girl is in love, and her lover is (explicitly or implicitly) Kṛṣṇa. The girl's emotions are approached from a variety of angles: the girl herself may be speaking, frequently addressing her mother, or her friend, or nature (with four 'messenger-poems' as a subgroup); the girl's mother may describe her strange behaviour, often to other women or also to Kṛṣṇa himself; finally the friend may speak to the mother.

[97] We may compare here the terminology used by medieval theologians. The two 'situations' (as they refer to Kṛṣṇa and bhakti) resemble the distinction drawn between *upāya* and *upēya*. Veṅkaṭanātha, defines both as 'a special kind of expansion of knowledge' (*jñāna-vikāsa-viśeṣam*); while the former requires 'instruments of knowledge' (*karaṇa-sâpekṣam*) and refers to an experience of the Absolute limited by the limitations of the religious exercises employed (*vidyā-viśeṣa-pratiniyata-guṇâdikaḷiṉālē niyata-brahma-viṣayam*), the latter constitutes a direct, intuitive vision of Viṣṇu in all his qualities (*svabhāva-prāptamum āy guṇa-vibhūty-ādikaḷ ellāttālum paripūrṇa-brahma-viṣayamum*). See *Rahasyatrayasāram*, chapter ix, pp. 361f. Keeping in mind that *upeya* as a state of being is a concept defined in terms of Śrīvaiṣṇava doctrine, while the 'mystical situation' is suggested by poetic and mystical language and thus evades a more precise conceptual definition, the comparison may be legitimate. Bhakti and Bhagavān are means towards obtaining a reality, a state of being, which once again is Bhagavān and bhakti; but so long as it has not been obtained, this state of being remains conditioned (-symbolic structures intervening between the *bhakta* and Bhagavān).

All these possibilities are common in classical *akam* poetry.[98] The structure, as found in the TVM, is as follows:

TABLE XIX



Roughly half of these songs make reference to a South Indian temple and thus specify the 'poetic landscape' envisaged within the 'real' landscape of the South. Table XX shows the distribution of speakers, audience, and temples:

TABLE XX

Breakdown of the twenty-three 'girl poems'

			non-temple	temple
girl:	1	to herself	V, 4	———
		to her mother	VII, 7	V, 5; VII, 3
		to her friend	V, 3	V, 9; VIII, 2
		to nature	II, 1; IX, 5	IX, 7
		(messages)	I, 4; VI, 8	VI, 1; IX, 7
mother:	2	to herself	VI, 6	VI, 7
		to other women	IV, 2.4; V, 6	———
		to Kṛṣṇa	II, 4	VII, 2
friend:	3	the girl's mother	IV, 6	VI, 5; VIII,9

[98] Ramanujan, 1970, p. 112, aptly says: 'The *dramatis personae* are limited by convention to a small number. . . . No poet here [in the *Kuṟu*.] speaks in his own voice, and no poem is addressed to a reader. The reader only overhears what the characters say to each other, to themselves, or to the moon.' A glance at Ramanujan's small selection shows that the TVM uses even less 'dramatis personae'; thus the 'he' does not occur as speaker (in the TVir he speaks *inter alia* in 9ff, 14, 22f, 50, 55, 57, 65-7, 75).

The gossiping women, nature, and Kṛṣṇa remain silent; the girl's friend intervenes—as does not occur in Sanskrit love-poetry or in *caṅkam akam* lyrics—between the girl and her mother, not between the girl and her lover. The mother's attention is divided between dealing with the slander of society, worrying about the girl, and scolding Kṛṣṇa. Only the mother actually talks to Kṛṣṇa; the girl can only address nature or tries to send messages to him through various animals—a striking device to stress Kṛṣṇa's transcendence and absence. Only once do we find a monologue by the girl; however great her agony, it is still part of society, whether sympathetic or not, and is communicated to an audience.

After these introductory remarks we can now turn to the analysis of these twenty-three songs.

(i) *The girl speaks*

V, 4[99] The girl, in the total loneliness of night, 'when the whole village is asleep' and 'all the world is compact darkness' (1) laments in her agony. Even 'her mother and friends are asleep, do not worry in what state she is in' (5). 'The sun does not rise and remains hidden, [preferring] not to see the great suffering' (4) of the girl. Her pain is caused—as a free refrain repeats in each stanza—because 'Kaṇṇaṉ, whose body resembles a rain-cloud, has not come' (5). Nobody will be able 'to save her life' (1.2); her own heart, stubbornly continuing to love Kṛṣṇa, has become 'inimical' to her (2.3), and a 'disease of the mind, too great even to think' (4) has fallen upon her, 'hurting her heart fiercely' (6). Darkness bites into her with 'particles of ice' (10), while the 'cool southern breeze, caressing, burns her more than hot fire' (8). She is 'melting away' (9f), while 'the ether dissolves in heat' (10). Kṛṣṇa's absence in turn has its reason, it seems, in the girl's own unworthiness. She is a great sinner, enslaved by 'strong deeds'—a key theme repeated in each stanza—which means, she is under the control of *pāpa*. But a closer investingation shows that the darkness enveloping the girl is more than just scenery and a secondary stimulant to her suffering. Kṛṣṇa is described as having 'the colour of the (dark-

[99] In *Naṟ*. 152 we have close similarities to this song, possibly the model of inspiration for the Āḻvār: 'The night inflicts suffering on me, pervaded by the far-reaching cries of the *aṉṟil* birds that cuddle up close to their females in the nest, for the so-called gentle northern breeze casts particles of ice all around. How can I survive without any protection?'

blue) *kāvi* flower' (2), as 'our black bull' (4), and as having 'a body like a rain-cloud' (5).[100] Thus darkness itself is a symbol of Kṛṣṇa and as such signifies a particular *mode of his presence*.[101]

VII, 7 The girl asks her mother about the various parts of Kṛṣṇa's face, describing the stunning effect each has had on her. About the eyes:

'My mother! Are they a couple of deaths devouring the life of a girl, or are they the holy eyes of beautiful Kaṇṇaṉ? I do not know.' (1)

More important than the fanciful similes is the psychological effect of the sight upon the girl. She 'cannot find any sleep' because Kṛṣṇa's eyes 'appear before her everywhere' (1), 'his holy nose is ablaze inside her heart and burns like the light of a stable powerful lamp' (2). His eyebrows 'lie heavily on her soul and hurt her' (4), his flashing teeth cut into her (5).

Is it a ball of nice black yarn rolled up, curly and with all-pervading darkness tied into it? No it is not: it is the hair of Māyaṉ! Mother, you keep on chattering, although you know nothing about how it steals my life by coming close to me and spreading everywhere the fragrance of the cool *tulsī*.. (9).

Thus the theme here is the agony of beauty, the painful rapture of looking at Kṛṣṇa's face.[102] Stylistically, we have variations here on the rather strange 'his foot fills my heart',[103] which implies an emotional introversion of the beautiful external objects. The girl's eyes absorb Kṛṣṇa's face, directing it into the heart where it causes ecstatic joy. However, following the Āḻvār's dialectic, the ecstasy is at the same time intense pain and agony. The present poem shows that even the opposite situation to that depicted in V, 4 is painful, though Kṛṣṇa is here so close that his eyes 'appear every-

[100] See VII, 7, 9 below for the symbolism of darkness; also *ad* II, 1, 7 and IX, 5, 7. A similar ambivalence of poetic symbolism is found with 'parrot', e.g., I, 4, 7; VI, 8, 5; IX, 5, 6.

[101] As justification for this way of interpreting the symbolism see PTAnt 49 and 73 quoted above.

[102] It is characteristic of the 'girl genre' that Kṛṣṇa is treated as the lover, on the same poetic plane as the girl. Even so, it seems likely that in writing the song the Āḻvār had a Kṛṣṇa sculpture or metal figure in mind: the play of light suggested in the song could well have been inspired by the reflections on the metal or the wet stone.

[103] See 3rdAnt 92. A poem similar to the one under discussion, particularly stanza 9, though without erotic-poetic frame, is the Aāp.

where' (1) and that 'his nose is ablaze inside her heart' (2); emotionally his presence is as painful as his 'not having come'. Note in particular the phrase 'deep darkness that pervades everywhere' (9), which connects the present with the previous song.

V, 5 The girl has 'seen the lord of Tirukkuṟuṅkuṭi' (the refrain in all stanzas), and since then she has been perturbed. As in the previous song, the various things seen have left a permanent impression on her:

> [Mother!] Do not be angry with me. You do not look using my own heart to see![104] After I have seen the lord of Tirukkuṟuṅkuti, his flashing sacrificial thread, his earrings, the Śrīvatsa on his chest—they follow me everywhere and remain [before my eyes]. (2)

His ornaments, weapons, attributes, and body 'always remain present in my eyes without parting; they are in my heart without leaving me' (3), they 'have settled down on my very life' (5), 'have filled my heart' (6). He himself 'has filled my inside and remains hidden in it' (7). He 'came like sugar, like milk, like nectar, and does not leave my heart' (9)—in short: 'a unique beauty rose up in the middle of a flood of light and moved into my heart.' (10)[105]

As in the previous song, the eyes have taken in Kṛṣṇa's beauty which enters into her heart, and fills it: in the rapture of beauty Kṛṣṇa and the girl seem to merge into one. But at the same time, the fusion remains incomplete: Kṛṣṇa is *hidden* in her heart (7), and—in a different image—'after I had seen Him, my heart went away along with his eyes and along with his beautiful red mouth.'(1)[106] Thus the rapture is as much 'unifying' as 'separating'. This is also what the mother observes: 'She has lost her mind; she is in pain' (3). 'The tears in her eyes never stop.'(4) Even so, it is not sympathy that the mother expresses, but she speaks 'angry words' (a second refrain): 'She will always be a shame to our family.' (6f) Thus the girl's pain is heightened by the fact that her mother (and society at large) cannot 'see with her own heart', and thus cannot understand her emotions.

VII, 3 This song could be regarded as a logical continuation of

[104] *En-neñcināl nōkki kkāṇīr*. Aṇṇa. renders *kāṇīr* not as negative, but as imperative, which is equally well possible.

[105] *Cōti veḷḷattiṉ uḷḷē eṉuvat' ōr uru^{v} eṉ-ṉeñc' uḷḷ' eṉum*.

[106] Compare already TVir 3f or 46, or PTAnt 49, where the heart runs away similarly.

the previous one; now the girl takes on a rôle which society has refused her: to go about her love in an *active* manner. In terms of *caṅkam* poetics, this would be *peruntiṇai*,[107] 'excessive love' which breaks the rules of social decorum. She says: 'I have no shame left! I shall look for him throughout the town, the country, and all other places.' (10) The girl argues with her mother (and with her friend as well, in 2f, 8f) and even with the whole of 'society' (in 2), first by trying to explain and make them understand. 'My mother! You do not see the way in which Kaṇṇaṉ rides on the Bird in the middle of my heart. What can I say to describe it?' (1) Changing the image (as in the previous song), she says: 'I cannot control this independent heart of mine, it is not under my influence. It has abandoned me, and day and night it is under the power of His red lips' (2). Her heart 'is firmly fixed on his eyes and has lost all shame and balance.' (3) She has 'sunk into His *māyā*.' (4)[108] Then she suggests what might be socially permissible: 'Please take me without delay to see TirupPēreyil where he resides' (5f). Yet before this could be achieved:

> My heart has gone to Pēreyil and searches for Him; I cannot see it returning. There is nobody who could call my heart back. Whom could I take for help, and what would be the use? (7)

Now she makes up her mind finally to break with society, and tells both her friend (8) and her mother (9): 'I shall go to Tirup-Pēreyil in the South where Kṛṣṇa resides and unite with Him there.' It is almost as if society were responsible for the emotional perturbation of the girl[109] by holding her back with the rules as to 'how nice girls should behave'. By overcoming these rules, she hopes to rejoin the disjointed parts of her personality.

[107] On *peruntiṇai* see p. above. We shall find it also in TVM V, 3, 9f (below) or in NTM XIII. A detailed discussion will be given *ad* PTMaṭ. *Tolk.* 1149 (= III, 5, 9) prescribes: 'Though her body and soul may be withering, the girl *cannot go to her lover* [when he is absent], but may only express her consternation about what she experiences.' But already the poetess Auvaiyār breaks this rule; in *Akan.* 147 the girl says: 'Indeed I have decided to follow him all the way over the highland' (lines 1f), and in *Akan.* 303: 'My stupid heart! You were so sure that he who left us alone would return. I have now decided to follow him on the path where he has gone!' (from lines 1f, 15ff). The *peruntiṇai* element here is the girl's lack of faith in her lover, and her refusal to accept a passive rôle.

[108] *Māyatt' āḷntēṉ.*

[109] But compare TVM V, 3. 4 and VI, 5 for a complementary rôle of society.

As one would expect, in the following three songs, addressed to the girl's friend, we find a more intimate and personal note. The girl does not have to argue or justify herself, but can simply pour out her heart.

V, 3 The present song builds up again to *peruntiṇai*, but in a much more radical way: she will 'ride on the *maṭal*', a horse-shaped contraption made of the prickly branches of the palmyra.[110] Already in the first stanza she says: 'What does the censure of the villagers who are such experts in slandering mean to me?' and this is repeated as a refrain (till 6). 'I have lost my mind, and obtained a golden complexion,[111] while searching for Kṛṣṇa.' (1f) Her composure is gone (2f), she has become emaciated (2), and 'coming or going, I cannot talk except about Him' (3). Stanza 4 gives us a metaphorical 'history' of her love:

> Friend! Is my Kaṇṇaṉ really so wicked? He made my love grow to ocean-size in the vast fields of my heart, which let the shoots rise after the rice-seeds—my passion—had been sown, watered by the words of my mother and fertilized with manure—the slander of the villagers.[112]

Thus her love is something organic which comes to life and grows to maturity through the combined agency of Kṛṣṇa himself and the girl's 'natural order', her own person as well as her social links. But this growth is painful, since an 'ocean-sized love' breaks the heart to pieces. 'Even so, my wicked heart remains stubborn and says: "He alone!"' (5) It refuses to abandon the cause of the pain, just as the girl herself cannot free herself from it: Kṛṣṇa 'has caught me in a net'—himself (6f).[113] He is nevertheless 'self-engrossed and cruel, full of *māyā* (5),[114] and evades her entreaties. Thus in the final two stanzas (9f) the girl decides to 'ride on the *maṭal*', to follow a social custom in which all aspects mentioned above are combined: it is an act of defying society, which will thereby be made to gossip and slander her as never before; an act of defying her lover, who will thereby be publicly exposed in his

110 The details of this strange custom will be given below, *ad* PTMaṭ.

111 On the 'golden complexion' see 4.323 above, with note 45. Note the 'barter' that has taken place between her and Kṛṣṇa.

112 *Ūravar kavvai eruv iṭṭu aṉṉai col nīr paṭuttu īra nel vitti muḷaitta neñca pperuñ ceyuḷ . . . kātal kaṭal puraiya viḷaivitta . . . nam Kaṇṇaṉ tōḷī kaṭiyaṉē.* –Compare *Kuṟaḷ* 1147.

113 *Akappaṭṭēṉ Vācutēvaṉ valaiyuḷē.*

114 *Kaṭiyaṉ kotiyaṉ...māyattaṉ.*

wickedness, for the sole purpose of gaining him; acting shamelessly because he deprived her of her shame, and gaining him through her lack of shame.

V, 9 The girl complains to her friends that she is become weaker everyday and that she is longing to worship the lord of Tiruvallavāl.

VIII, 2 'In front of other people I feel too embarrassed, and now I am groping for words with which to tell you. But I cannot find them anywhere' (1). Thus external symptoms have to indicate her emotions. 'Desiring Him who lives on Vēṅkaṭam, my bracelets slipped off,[115] I lost all my beauty. My large breasts turned yellow, and I became emaciated' (1). In a sense, she herself 'went away along with Him' and 'lost her very nature' (4). Kṛṣṇa her lover is enigmatic:

> If one thinks about it—his beautiful charm cannot be measured by my words. But let it be: even the gods are constantly in doubt about this point.

She faces another dilemma:

> Vaikuntam, the milk-ocean, and the Collyrium Mountain (=Vēṅkaṭam) could easily be reached, but he won't permit me to see those places unless I cut my fetters. (8)[117]

These fetters are what keeps the 'I' back, when 'the heart had said: "I do not care about you", abandoned me, and went to his feet' (10). Stanza 11 gives us a further clue: '. . . cut asunder all other attachments that powerfully bind, with the help of that one fetter—the desire to reach His feet.'[118] Similarly, love for Kṛṣṇa is compared to a net[119] or a rope;[120] thus the 'fetters' mentioned here are everything that prevents the girl from being 'caught (in His net)', and this being caught severs all other fetters. *Peruntiṇai* symbolizes on the emotional and social level the breaking of these fetters: to follow 'after the heart' in the direction which is pointed out by disappearance of 'the bracelet and the fine dark complexion' (3).

II, 1[121] Nature as a symbolic representation of the emotions is the

[115] On this *motif* see above 4.323, *ad* TVir 13.

[116] *Tollai*^{y} *añ cōti ninaikkuṅkāl en coll aḷav' anr' imaiyōr tamakkum ellai*^{y} *ilātana kūlppu cceyyum attiram nirka.*

[117] *Vaikuntamum pār-kaṭalum añcana verpum avai naṇiya . . . pācaṅkaḷ viṭṭa pinnai*^{y} *anri avan avai kāṇ koṭānē.*

[118] *Pātam aṭaiv' atan pācattālē marra val'pācaṅkaḷ murra viṭṭu.*

[119] See above V, 3, 6f: *valai.*

[120] See II, 1, 5: *pācam.*

[121] BhP X, 90, 15ff (discussed in 5.327) is a free Skt. rendering of the song.

fundamental characteristic of the *akattiṇai*;[122] in Nammāḻvār this is transformed by imposing on nature something like a capacity *for* emotion. Since Kṛṣṇa is 'the first one' (10), 'the beginning of everything without exception' (11), nature is related to Him, as man is. The present song poses the question whether nature participates in a universal longing for Kṛṣṇa which the girl 'and her friends' (5) experience. Such cosmic suffering could explain—in the eyes of the girl—why nature has the power to intensify her own suffering, or, in a modern simile, how nature functions as a sympathetic string in resonance with the girl and thereby increases her suffering. The girl addresses the cormorant (*nārai*), the *anril* bird, the ocean, the north wind, the sky with its rain-clouds, the waning moon, the darkness of night, the water channels, the lamp burning in the night, and—as a unique feature—Kṛṣṇa (in stanza 10).[123] Stanza 9 may illustrate the poem:

'O lamp that does not get extinguished! Is it that you too are miserable, burning in the desire for Perumāṉ, so that the fragile life inside you dries up, while love[124] causes you pain by not reaching extinction?'[125]

The same imagery is also used in her address to Kṛṣṇa:

You made my fragile life, that suffers from a love whose heat does not get extinguished, while drying up my inside, collapse in you (10).[126]

Significantly, the only other stanza where the element of sympathy is absent is directed to the 'compact darkness': 'For how long will you remain hostile to me, staying right inside me and behaving most cruelly!' (7)[127] Darkness shares more than any of the other things addressed the nature of Kṛṣṇa, and thus it behaves exactly like Him. In that sense, as mentioned above, it symbolizes His very presence. But also the other objects, like the 'sleepless crying ocean' (3), suffer because of Kṛṣṇa's immanent presence in them,

[122] See pp.

[123] Most of the items addressed are also apostrophized in classical *akam* poems; for further details on these *caṅkam motifs* see 4.331.2 *ad* VIII, 5.

[124] The *śleṣa* of *sneha*, 'love' and 'oil', is well-known in Skt. and Prakrit poems; but Nammāḻvār uses *kātal*, which does not allow for this pun.

[125] *Nōnt' ārā kkātal nōy mell āviy uḷḷ ulartta nantā viḷakkamē! nīyum aḷiyattāy . . . Emperumāṉ . . . ācaiyāl vēvāyē?*

[126] *Vēv' ārā vēṭkai nōy mell āviy uḷḷ ulartta . . . uṉ pālē vīḻtt' oḻintāy.* 'Collapse' is an attempt to render *vīḻtt'oḻintāy* lit.: 'made to sink into and vanish'.

[127] *Nī naṭuvē vēṟṟōr vakaiyil koṭit' āy . . . māṟṟāṇmai niṟṟiyō . . . iruḷē.*

and thus the girl's agony increases because even in these things she experiences the painful presence of Kṛṣṇa.

IX, 5 In this song, the emotional impact of nature on the girl is more varied. In the first stanza she apostrophizes female *kuyil* birds:

You and your mates dear as your own life,
don't coo here!
When you call each other, it inflicts pain on my life.
To call Kaṇṇaṉ who is my life so that he comes,
—that you cannot do!
Could you do at least so much for me:
to coo away my life and hand it over to Him?

She is unable to hear the cooing of the *kuyils* who are happy in the company of their 'dear lives', while her own 'life', Kṛṣṇa, is far away. Their union does not bring about her own union with Him in this world, but heightens her desolation and strikes at her very soul. Death appears as the ultimate pain, and yet as the only means to overcome that pain through union in another world.

In the second stanza, the reverse situation in nature produces the same emotional result. 'O female *anril*[128] bird! You and your male—how much you wail in suffering! Please, do not do this', for—we can add with the commentator—your wailing kills me. Whether nature displays union or separation, it is painful for the girl. 'My thoughts, words, and deeds are all over there (with Kṛṣṇa) but my body and my soul are between us, trembling.' (4)[129]

Stanza 6, addressed to a young parrot, points out the other aspect of nature, to conjure up—magically or metaphorically—Kṛṣṇa's pain-inflicting presence.

Don't prattle! Whose lips resemble your red beak, whose eyes, hands and feet (are red like yours), who possesses your own blue-blackish colour, who is my very life, He united with me and then abandoned me.

Similarly also: 'You crowds of rain-clouds resembling my Black Sapphire, do not show me your form—it would mean my death.' (7) 'You young *kuyils*! You kill me by prattling the names of Kaṇṇaṉ.' (8) Thus nature, even when it provides a symbolic presence of

[128] The *anril* corresponds to the *krauñca* 'curlew', of Skt. poetry, 'a model of constancy and inseparable love' (MTL); see Vaudeville, 1974, pp. 160f, note 6.

[129] *Vākkum maṉamuṁ karumamum namakk' āṅkatē ākkaiyum āviyum antaram niṉr' uḷalumē.*

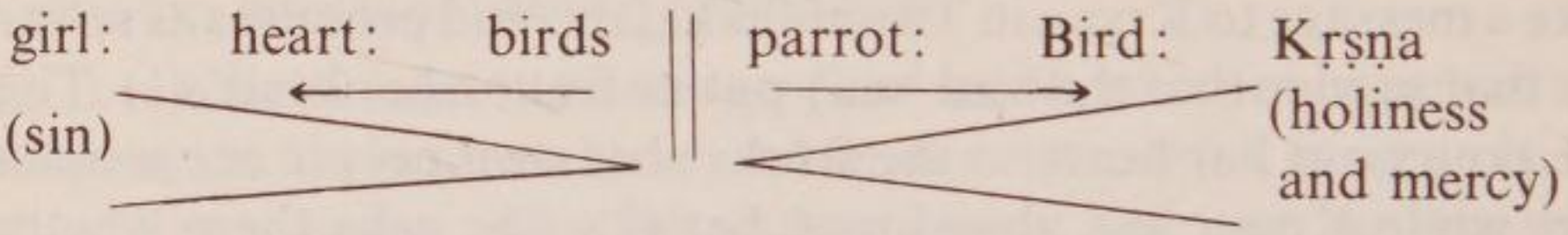
Kṛṣṇa (in the clouds' or the parrot's dark form or in the *kuyil*'s 'speaking His names') does not really bring the girl together with Kṛṣṇa (the symbols are not a real *sym-bolon*), but tears her own person further apart. In so far as nature is permeated by Kṛṣṇa, it acts upon her as He does, and in so far as it stands in the same relation to Him as she does, it suffers (see II, 1), which again sympathetically increases her agony. Even natural beauty is not soothing: 'You bees! You are greatly talented, but don't sing your melodies. Your soft humming is as if a spear were thrust into a wound.' (9)

IX, 7 Here the girl accepts the imaginary rôle of nature as a mediator between herself and Kṛṣṇa. She attempts to entice a crane to take a message to Kṛṣṇa in Tirumūḻikkaḷam, and promises as reward for that service that the bird 'may put its feet on her head' (1). Then she pours out her heart to the storks: her own people are scolding her, while Kṛṣṇa has abandoned her (2). She asks them whether she is at all fit for Him (3). Turning to the clouds, she sarcastically asks whether they think Kṛṣṇa would clip their wings to punish them for taking her message to Him (4). She tries to encourage bees (6.8) to take her message, and mentions specifically that Mūḻikkaḷam has 'gardens where [you can] suck honey, humming on the flowers' (6). The storks should report to her about Kṛṣṇa (7). This song represents a transition from the previous two to the following three, in which actual messages are given.

I, 4 The girl entrusts mostly birds (in stanza 6 the bees and in 9 the north wind) with messages to Kṛṣṇa; then realizing the futility of such an action, she gets annoyed: (addressing the *pūvai* birds) 'You have not told him anything—from now on you can look for someone else to put sweet food into your beaks!' (8) She therefore turns to a more intimate and reliable messenger, her own heart: 'Speak to Him about [my condition], and do not give up until I, sinner, have united with Him' (10). Other stanzas make similar references to the girl's 'sinful' nature: 'her sins have prevented her from serving Him' (2), her 'strong deeds do not come to an end' (3), and 'He withholds His favours because He thinks only of her sins' (7).[130] As in TVM V, 4, 'sin' is seen here as the primary cause of His absence, nature's ineffectiveness as mediator moving to secondary importance. Her condition is only briefly described. She has lost her mind to Him (3), her thoughts are confused (3),

[130] *En pilaiyē ninaint' aruḷi aruḷāta Tirumāl.*

her eyes are filled with tears (5), she has lost her beauty (8), the 'north wind hurts as if threads were pulled through her bones' (7)[131] and the parrot 'chafes her bones' (7), and she will die soon. (4.6) We have seen above that the 'parrot' prominently symbolizes Kṛṣṇa's presence;[132] but just as she realizes the futility of speaking to nature, and turns to her heart, she becomes aware of the insufficiency of this form of 'presence'. Following the same symbolism, she turns to a more intimate representation of Kṛṣṇa—'the Bird who is an ocean of mercy' (6).[133] This is Garuḍa, who by virtue of Kṛṣṇa's own quality of mercy[134] participates in it. We could formalize the dynamism of the song in this way:



The seeming meeting of the girl with Kṛṣṇa via the symbolic structure of nature terminates in the realization of its indirectness and insufficiency. By trying to make the relationship more immediate (turning to the heart and to the Bird), the basic incongruity of 'sin' and 'holiness'[135] becomes apparent. Only His *mercy* can overcome it, and this is precisely what the messages are about: 'that he has mercy' (4), 'give her your grace' (6), 'ask for mercy' (7), etc. Accepting nature as mediator, the girl realizes its mediateness, and that immediate contact with Kṛṣṇa is only possible through grace.

VI, 8 The items apostrophized are similar to those in the previous song, with the exception of the girl's dolls (in stanza 7). The awareness of 'sin' and of the insufficiency of the mediators is missing, but 'separation' here acquires a dynamic character (compared with the static conception of Kṛṣṇa's 'absence' expressed above). 'Kṛṣṇa took away my good nature' (1), 'he betrayed and abandoned me' (4), 'he stole my heart' (5), and the girl 'obtained a

131 *Enp' ilai kōppatu pōla ppaṉi vāṭai^{y} īrkiṉṟa.*

132 See IX, 5, 6.

133 Already in stanza 1, Kṛṣṇa is characterised by the Bird. In VI, 8, 5 (below), the symbolism is equally explicit. Compare TVir 3f, 6, 19, 22, 24, 28, etc., for the Bird as symbol of Kṛṣṇa's presence.

134 In stanza 6, *aruḷ āli^{y} Ammāṉ* 'the Lord who is an ocean of mercy', is a direct attribute of Kṛṣṇa.

135 See in 2 or 7 *tiru^{v} aṭi* 'His sacred feet'.

golden complexion after seeing the king of gods.' (8) Thus her suffering is here due to an initial union with Kṛṣṇa, after which he abandoned her and robbed her. The only rationale suggested is Kṛṣṇa's wilfulness, he 'who is the lord of *māyā*' (7). Thus the suffering arises because at some moment the girl has experienced happiness, but before the 'lord of *māyā*' can be contained in that experience, he vanishes. Stanzas 3 and 4 are addressed to bees; they illustrate how the Āḻvār intermingles union and separation poetically. Both Kṛṣṇa and the girl are adorned with flowers; the girl sends the bees to suck the honey from Kṛṣṇa's *tulsī*, promising them as reward her own flowers (pregnantly the *mullai*, in 4). This commuting of the bees is a kind of metaphorical union, but she is painfully aware that if it were a real union there would be no need for the bees: the message they are supposed to take is in fact the accusation that He abandoned her (4).

The parrot and Bird symbolism found in the previous song is repeated in stanza 5:

O parrots brought up by me! Go and see Him
who has red eyes, and red lips, and resembles a dark cloud,
who came riding on the Bird with fierce eyes
and stole my heart.

The second line describes Kṛṣṇa in terms applicable also to the parrots; while they have to fly to Him, He once came to her flying on the Bird. Direct presence of Kṛṣṇa alternates with a form-bound and symbolic presence in a dynamic play of the emotions—*māyā* on the mystical level.

VI, 1 This song is addressed to various birds, who are requested to tell 'Kaṇṇaṉ who is full of wicked cunning tricks' (9) and who 'lives in Tiruvaṇvaṇṭūr' (the refrain) about the girl's suffering.

These songs spoken by the girl herself do not exhaust the whole range of poetically conceived mysticism, for the songs spoken by the mother throw further light on the experiences and emotions of the girl—they are poetic devices to illuminate aspects which the girl herself could not talk about.

(ii) *The mother speaks*

VI, 6 This is a song of simple structure. The mother describes Kṛṣṇa in the first three lines of each stanza, and concludes in the fourth line: 'My daughter [here she lists various qualities the girl

possessed] has lost X to Kṛṣṇa'. This variable X comprises: her conch-bracelet, her dark complexion, her honour, natural disposition, chastity, body, beauty, respectability, elegance, and decorum. In other words she moves further and further away from the girl's situation to her own, she is most worried about the loss of those virtues which to develop and preserve has been the mother's task. The girl has abandoned the role she was to play in society, for which she had been trained so carefully.

VI, 7 Here we require the mother for the simple reason that the girl is not there: poetically speaking, she has eloped, and mystically, she has united with Kṛṣṇa. The main concern of the mother is, as usual, with what people say about the disappearance. 'She took no account of all the gossip about our family;' (10) 'won't those females in the neighbourhood, women with mouths like crickets', call out: "That's the limit! She does have great virtue. . . !"' (4) Her thoughts go back to the time when the girl was still with her, though already suffering in her unfulfilled love. Then, time and again, she tries to imagine what the eloped girl is experiencing.

A series of descriptions shows us the girl's world totally permeated by Kṛṣṇa.

My young deer, with eyes full of tears, said time and again: 'Kaṇṇaṉ is the boiled rice I eat, the water I drink, and all the other food I live on.' (1)
My 'doll' called her *mina* bird, her green parrots, the balls she played with, the toy baking-vessels, and her flower basket by Tirumāl's names (3).

Her feelings were those of longing and agony: 'her slender waist withered away' (4), 'she faded, unable to play' (5), 'her mind perturbed, her eyes brimming with tears, she called out "Māl!" and fainted.' (7) Soon, the mother muses, the girl 'will be delighted when she sees in TirukKōḷūr the temple of her Tirumāl which will soothe her soul;' (5) 'she will stay motionless, her long eyes filled with tears, when she sees the eyes of her Tirumāl.' (6) 'Tears' connect the two experiences of longing for and 'seeing the eyes' of Tirumāl, just as in the mother's mind past memories and present imaginings interpenetrate each other: the agony of longing and the agony of 'seeing', we could say, are not basically different so long as the 'fetters' have not been cut.[137]

IV, 2 Here the mother addresses herself to other women, in the

[136] *Kaṭiya māyaṉ taṉṉai Kaṇṇaṉai.*
[137] See above, VIII, 2, 8.

hope of receiving some advice or help in her difficult situation. 'O ladies! You too have given birth to daughters and brought them up with affection. What can I do?' (9) Behind this lies a typical adolescent problem: 'What can I do? My daughter, my tender one, does not pay attention to my words, nor does she bother about what I say. O ladies!' (10) However, the seriousness of the situation is indicated by the fact that the mother, in the first four stanzas of the song, is surprisingly emphatic about her own 'sinfulness', the heavy load of 'deeds' that oppress her. The daughter 'is perturbed (*mālum*)' (1.6), 'becomes more feeble day by day (*nai–*)' (5), 'shrinks and breaks down (*maṭaṅkum*)' (7), and 'languishes (*meliyum*)' (10), because 'she has fallen in love (*nampum*)' (8) with Māyōn̲. The mother quotes her girl's permanently repeated references to the *tulsī*: 'the *tulsī* on the feet of Kaṇṇan̲ belongs to my tender, decorated, golden breasts!' (10) We hear of the daughter's exclamations which refer to mythical exploits; in these references the emphasis is on erotic *motifs*: 'he who did naughty things with the cowherd girls, their waists thin as creepers, and who joined with them in the *kuravai*' (2), 'who killed the seven bulls for the sake of Pinn̲ai, and who, as the cowherd boy, danced with the vessels' (5), 'who has placed on his chest the lady Śrī' (7), 'he set Laṅkā on fire for the sake of Sītā' (8).[138] Māyōn̲ has demonstrated in the mythical past that he loves women, that he is prepared to commit himself to their welfare and also his own pleasures with them. This is the stimulus for the girl's love, and at the same time her assurance that he will not abandon her, and her means of keeping it alive within herself.

IV, 4 Here the mother appears in a new rôle: she describes and categorizes the girl's state. The theme of VI, 7, 1 and 3 is expanded: the whole environment of the girl is pervaded by, suggestive and reminiscent of, and transformed into, Kṛṣṇa. Whatever the girl sees, she associates with Kṛṣṇa and reacts to it as if it were Kṛṣṇa himself. Such associations have a variety of logical bases, of which the metaphor is only one.[139] The fire, the cool breeze, a

[138] That this emphasis on erotic themes in these mythological references is intended can be seen from stanza 6. To the mention of Varāha's lifting the earth a pleonastic 'for the sake of the lady Earth' is added; even in the case of the Boar incarnation, interest in a woman is the motive.

[139] Maṇavāḷa Mā muṉi says in TVMNū 34 *pōli mutaḷāṉa poruḷai* 'objects that show resemblance *and so on* (to Kṛṣṇa)'.

mountain, rain-clouds, etc., are associated (which means here that they are in a quasi-magical way identified) with Kṛṣṇa because of common attributes. The general may suggest the specific, as any temple suggests Kṛṣṇa's temple (8). Some item may be connected with Kṛṣṇa through a mythical incident: a calf, or a cow, is herded by him, any flute must be played by Him, any butter must secretly be eaten by Him; the ocean is where he reclines, any snake is His couch. Or it may be a theological truth, as when the sand in which the girl plays is part of the earth 'measured' by Kṛṣṇa as Vāmana.

We have here the most general form of 'symbolic representation' of Kṛṣṇa; *any* phenomenon in the girl's empirical reality is linked with Kṛṣṇa in a number of ways: it is His creation, He handled it (in mythical incidents), it resembles Him, and He is present in it (as the immanent god). In the 'mystical situation' of the girl, these objects reveal Kṛṣṇa in themselves and she experiences the representation as the represented.

But the song contains two correctives to this 'experience of union': the mother, and the modality of the experience itself. *Firstly*, the mother knows rationally that the sign is not identical with what it signifies. In poetic language this is expressed by saying that her daughter is 'mentally disturbed',[140] 'mad';[141] what the girl does evades her reason (2), and she shows 'ever-increasing insanity'.[142] But the mother diagnoses further: the girl's mental unbalance is caused by, perhaps even part of, Kṛṣṇa's own *māyā*.[143] 'What can I do to Him who caused great madness in my daughter?' (1)[144] 'Such love-madness he caused in my tender one' (4).[145] 'I do not know whether there will be any end to the dance in which Māyōṉ causes infatuation in my "creeper"' (5).[146] 'Māyōṉ is making my

[140] In 7: *tēṟātum* lit: 'without clear understanding'.

[141] In 10: *mayal*; MTL *ad locum* 'mad'.

[142] In 6f: *ēṟiya pittu*.

[143] *Eṟiya pittu* (in 6f) could also be interpreted as 'madness due to possession'. According to the MTL, *ēṟu-* in that meaning ('to be possessed by a demon. . .') is found in TVM V, 6, 1. In IV, 6 and in TVir 20 this is obvious, since the mother calls a shaman (*vēlaṉ*) to drive out her love-sickness = the demon.

[144] *Peru mayal ceytāṟku*.

[145] *Maiyalkaḷ ceytāṉ*; *maiyal* 'infatuation of love' MTL for TVM VII, 2, 6; 'madness' MTL for *Kuṟaḷ* 838.

[146] *Ām aḷav' onṟum aṟiyēṉ . . . valliyai Māyōṉ māl ceykiṉṟa kūttē*. —Note the play *māl*- Māl.

daughter cry out in sorrow and lose consciousness' (9).[147] Significantly, the mother mentions (in 4) that the girl is 'dancing' (*ālum*) in her frenzy, thus the girl's mad behaviour is also externally linked with Kṛṣṇa's 'mad dance.'[148] Thus while the mother on the one hand denies the ontological validity of the girl's 'mystical situation' (Kṛṣṇa is everything), she nevertheless establishes a psychological identity (Kṛṣṇa *is in* the girl's madness, he is possessing her).

Turning, *secondly*, to the girl, we find in the song a fairly extensive catalogue of ecstatic symptoms.[149] We hear of:

tears (1f.10), exhaustion or fainting (2, *naiyum*), analgesia to external pain (3)[150], dancing (4), anxiety (8, *veruvu*), swooning (8, *vīḻvu*), nervous looking around her (10), gazing into the distance (10), perspiring (10, *viyarkkum*), sighs (10), bodily collapse (10, *mey cōrum*).

Many of these symptoms occur in other songs in contexts where Kṛṣṇa 'has abandoned' the girl, thus psychologically the ecstasy of seeing her whole environment reflect Kṛṣṇa (and, according to the mother, of being 'possessed by Kṛṣṇa') is nevertheless identical with the experience of separation.

V, 6 This song brings out even more clearly certain features found in the previous one. Now the girl claims that *she is* Kṛṣṇa and in a long series of exuberant proclamations usurps all His deeds and functions. While previously it was the girl's environment that appeared 'filled with Kṛṣṇa', here it is the girl herself, so that Kṛṣṇa's relationship to the world becomes identical to her own. The first stanza may serve as an example; 'earth' is here the theme upon which she plays the various relations with Kṛṣṇa:

147 *Peṇṇiṉai Māyōṉ alaṟṟiy ayarppikkiṉṟāṉē*. I take *alaṟṟu-* to be a causative of *alaṟu-* (the MTL lists it only as intensive intransitive), and *ayar-ppi-* again as causative of *ayar-* (MTL: *ayar-ttal* 'to forget', *ayar-ppu* 'forgetfulness'). Aṇṇa. renders it as causative of Skt. *muh-* 'to make faint'.

148 If we accept the idea of 'possession' (*ēṟu-* in 6f, in IV, 6, 11, in V, 6, 1 and TVir 20), we can connect the situation with that of VII, 9 and TVir 48: Kṛṣṇa takes over the actions of the girl, he as the lord of *māyā* becomes the primary agent in her behaviour, by which in turn he manifests his own 'madness' (*mayal*, *māl*).

149 A similar list can be found in II, 4 (below), and individual items are mentioned in practically all other girl poems.

150 *Cen tīyai ttaḻuvi . . . mey vēvāḷ* 'touching red-hot fire, she does not burn her body'. *Vēvāḷ* is ambiguous here; with the comm. (Aṇṇa.: *vēkiṉṟ' ilaḷ*) I have translated it as *negative*, although *vēvāḷ* would more commonly be a future positive ('she will burn herself'), *vēyāḷ* being the more natural negative.

I myself have created. . ., I have become. . . , I have taken possession of. . ., I have lifted up. . . , I have devoured—the earth bordered by the ocean.[151]

In stanza 4 we have a close link with TVM VII, 9:

I myself am the deed done now, all the things to be done in future, everything that was done in the past; I myself shall enjoy the fruit of all actions, and shall create all who act.[152]

This is the only song in the TVM in which from the girl's point of view a full mystical identification has been achieved, without any flavour of 'separation'. But the mother remains critical; from her more rationalistic standpoint she has to wonder 'whether Kaṇṇaṉ has entered her and is possessing her' (the refrain to all stanzas).[153] I presume that this is the device by which the Āḻvār wanted to indicate the contingency of even this type of experience.[154]

II, 4 Here the mother appears in a new rôle: she intervenes with Kṛṣṇa himself on the girl's behalf. In TVM IV, 4 and V, 6 we have seen how the mother makes Kṛṣṇa the primary agent in the girl's behaviour, and as a logical continuation, she now speaks to him directly.

Kṛṣṇa's attitude does not allow for anything but reproof and upbraiding 'You have no compassion, so that she could see you' (2); sarcastically she asks: 'What good qualities do you have?' (5) More directly: 'What deceitful deeds have you done to her!' (7) Only in the last stanza she strikes a humbler note: 'Do not harm her lovely fresh beauty.' (10)

Again she gives an elaborate description of the girl's emotional state: 'She dances and dances', 'melts away inside', 'constantly sings songs', 'her eyes get filled with tears', 'she is in great agony' (1); 'in the desire to see you she becomes feeble' (2); 'she is like a candle or sealing-wax near the fire' (3); 'she sighs, her heart whirling round' (4); 'she talks incoherent nonsense' (5); 'the soul in her inside spins round and dries up' (7). Unlike TVM IV, 4, these

[151] Kṛṣṇa is referred to here as creator, maintainer (*antaryāmī*), Vāmana, Varāha, and destroyer (the baby at the time of *pralaya*) of the universe.

[152] *Ceykinra kiti*[y] *ellām yāṉē ceyvā-ninranakaḷum yāṉē/ceytu munn irantatuvum yāṉē/ceykai ppayaṉ uṇpēṉum yāṉē/ceyvārkaḷai cceyvēṉum yāṉē.*

[153] *Vant' ēra koḷo.*

[154] The very pronounced 'I myself' (*yāṉē*), endlessly repeated, will hardly allow for an interpretation in terms of *advaita*.

symptoms, superficially speaking, are caused by Kṛṣṇa's lack of compassion, because he does *not* show himself to the girl. He is her 'refuge' (8), yet 'how much does she suffer' (8). But he is not just 'refuge' in an external sense, and thus 'separated from her':

> She melts away, her heart perishing. She calls out: 'O worthy one, who abide inside my inside!' Then she gets very excited and says: 'O you nectar for the life of my inside!' (6)

The suffering she experiences is right inside her, and that *because he is* 'inside her inside'.

VII, 2 This song, in which the mother addresses Kṛṣṇa as the lord of Araṅkam displays the whole of bhakti's enigmatic and dialectical nature. The mother reports the girl's words: 'O you who gave happiness and misery to me!' (7)[155] From what has been said above we have to understand that happiness and misery are not differentiated according to different emotional situations, the 'presence' and 'absence' of Kṛṣṇa. One is intrinsically connected with the other: 'She came close to your feet, and clasped them—*as if she had not obtained* your feet.' (10)[156] Most of the description the mother provides here suggests Kṛṣṇa's 'absence': 'day and night she cannot find sleep for her eyes' (1), 'she says: "O come to me!" repeating it again and again, and faints.' (4f) This looks 'as if she had not reached' his feet, but the mother assures us that in fact 'she came close to his feet'. This dilemma, that she feels 'as if' separated when Kṛṣṇa is close, rests ultimately on Kṛṣṇa's own nature: he 'is not perceptible to the eyes' (3), and yet a deep desire makes the girl say: 'Please let me know a means by which to see you!' (3)[157]

(iii) *The friend speaks to the mother*

Except for the last two songs, we have seen that the mother appears as the one who worries, is bothered, preoccupies herself with social values like 'decent behaviour' etc. The friend, to whom the girl can pour out her heart, is the one who understands and thus can explain a few things to the mother. In the following three songs, she attempts to re-establish the girl's links with society, to prevent

155 *Tuṉpaṅkaḷ inpaṅkaḷ paṭaittāy.*
156 *Aṭiy aṭaiyātāḷ pōl ivaḷ aṇukiy aṭaintaṉaḷ.*
157 *Kaṭk ilīy! uṉṉai kkāṇum āṟ' aruḷāy!*

the mother from performing useless rituals, and to point out another way of looking at the girl's suffering.

VI, 5 The friend argues with the mother, who has expressed 'moral indignation' over the girl's scandalous behaviour. Her words can be linked with TVM V, 3, 4, in which a somewhat positive rôle of society had been suggested. The friend reminds the mother a number of times that 'it was you yourself who cut the bond of affection between you and her, by taking her to Tollaivillimaṅ-kalam' (2).[158] In other words, just as a girl's 'nice behaviour' is part of society, so is religion as an institution; society (with which you always so carefully conform) ensures the continuation of this institution by the very fact that mothers take their little girls to the temple, 'pointing out how Pirāṉ stands there: with eyes like red lotuses and radiating with his ornaments' (5). The problem arises when the girl breaks through the institutionally restrained symbols (the temple image) and gives way inside her own heart to what the symbols symbolize. This then involves transcending the limits imposed by society, and although society initially stimulated the girl to do so, it cannot accept its own negation. The friend pleads that the mother recognize her own responsibility for what has happened, show understanding and sympathy for the girl, and thereby, we may conclude, establish a *new* 'bond of affection' between herself and her daughter. This is after all what the girl has asked her to do: 'Use my own heart to see'.[159] Moreover, it is precisely because the girl is still held back by 'fetters'[160]—which do include such a 'bond of affection'—that every experience of hers contains suffering. She may 'not be any more subject to any restraint' (4),[161] yet she is still subject to the rule of her physical existence, and that includes being part of society.

But even the friend is at a loss as to the precise rationale of the girl's behaviour: 'Is it the result of deeds done in former lives, or is it the *māyā* of Kṛṣṇa?' (7) 'Is she Piṉṉai, or Earth, or lady Tiru, born on earth?' (10) The friend points out here three major possibilities in Indian thought to explain the girl's behaviour: the laws of *karma*, the notion of a 'manifestation' (~ *avatāra*), and Kṛṣṇa's

158 *Tollaivillimaṅkalam koṇṭu pukku . . . nīr umakk' ācai^{y} iṉri^{y} akaṟṟiṉīr.*

159 See TVM V, 5, 2 above.

160 See VIII, 2, 8 above.

161 *Oṟkam oṉṟum ilaḷ.*

māyā (or *līlā*). Only the last notion is mentioned in the other songs of the Āḻvār.[162]

IV, 6 The girl's love-sickness has reached a critical stage. The friend, aware of the real cause of the illness, admonishes the mother to employ the only appropriate cure that exists: the worship of Māyōn. The song is set against the background of archaic Tamil ideas about, and customs connected with, possession, but makes it clear that the girl's love of Kṛṣṇa is 'possession' in the true sense, that means something through which the ancient practices lose their meaning.[163] The friend tells the mother that the girl's disease is a 'good disease' (*naṉ nōy*), because 'her mind gets confused and becomes disturbed on account of Him who possesses *māyam*'.[164] Using the phraseology of 'possession' she says that 'the disease she is suffering is a very exalted deity; it is not the young god (Murukaṉ) for whom you dance, without dignity, the *aṇaṅku*'.[165] All it needs to cure her is to shout, so that she can hear it, the words 'discus' and 'conch' (2). It would be a mistake to listen to the *kaṭṭuvicci*, the female soothsayer,[166] and a waste to offer alcohol and meat (3),

[162] The question of *karma* is most complex in the Āḻvārs; it seems impossible to see in statements like those made in TVM V, 4; I, 4, etc., simply the mechanistic conception of *karma* and not also something like an awareness of *personal guilt*. Kṛṣṇa as the lord over all *karma* could destroy it at will (see, e.g., V, 2 or V, 6, 4). For a more detailed discussion see 4.421, second half. There is no evidence in the TVM for the assumption that the reference to a possible 'incarnation' of any of the three consorts of Māl is anything but poetical and imaginative. To see in Āṇṭāḷ an *avatāra* of Bhūmi is something belonging to a much later period (see 6.22 with note 30). See note 148 above for the idea that *māyā* acts in the girl.

[163] On the cult of possession as typical of ancient Tamil society see 3.214 above, with notes 78-86; the poet discards it as 'pagan', just as the song dedicated to his home-town Kurukūr attacks Śaivite religion (TVM IV, 10). Compare TVM IV, 4 and TVir 20 above, and CTMaṭ below, on 'possession'.

[164] In stanza 1: *māya . . . ārkku ivaḷ cintai tuḻāy tticaikkiṉratē.*

[165] In stanza 2: *ticaikkiṉratēy ivaḷ nōy itu mikka perum teyvam. icaipp' iṉri nīr aṇaṅk' āṭum iḷan teyvam aṉṟ' itu.* The dance is styled *cuṇaṅkai* in 7, and 11 speaks of *veṟikaḷ*. The former is derived by the MTL from *tuṇaṅkai*, which in turn is connected with *tuḷaṅku-* 'to sway from side to side'; it is said to be 'a dance in which the arms bent at the elbows are made to strike against the sides'. For *tuṇaṅkai* the MTL also gives 'devil' (*pēy*) and 'festival'. For *veṟi* (DED 4536), the semantic field combines—inseparably it seems—intoxication through liquor with mental derangement. Stanza 7 mentions that *kaḷ*, some intoxicating liquor, is consumed during the dance.

[166] She is described (in 4) as 'incessantly babbling, and of unique trickery'; the word must be connected with *kaṭṭu* No. 17 of MTL 'divination, foretelling events' (and No. 13 of the verb, 'to bind by spells'). DED 961 has for Toda *koṭ-/koṭy-* 'kill

and to scatter rice (4). Instead, she should worship the 'lord of *māyam*' (3), reciting his names (4). The *aṇaṅku* dance will be of no use to the sick girl (5f); the correct medicine is to touch her with 'white dust',[167] and to 'worship those who have learned the Vedas, the subjects of Māyaṉ' (7). 'It is wicked that you have not His feet worshipped by those who have learned the Vedas, that you are confused by liquor, raise the clamour of music, and dance the *aṇaṅku*!' (8)

The sociological tension which is indicated here is reflected in a number of paradoxical statements: Māyōṉ caused the disease, which only the mother—following the friend's advice—can cure by worshipping the same Māyōṉ, the only cure. Although Māyaṉ is so close to the girl that he can be said to 'possess' her, she is as if without life; while dance to the 'young god' is useless, the means and the effect of the cure is 'dance and worship' (in 10 for the girl, and in 11 the poet about himself). The disease can only be cured by other people sharing in it, and ecstatic dance is as much the medicine as the manifestation of health, just as it also symbolizes the very disease![168]

VIII, 9 As it happens, this last song appropriately concludes our discussion by making reference to a 'full' union of the lovers (not, as in V, 6, in a rather intellectual construction). The friend draws the mother's attention to a number of telltales which suggest that the girl 'has embraced Kaṇṇaṉ of TirupPuliyūr'. The friend describes him in such emphatic terms that it looks almost as if she had seen him 'with the girl's own heart' (<V, 5, 2). In the first stanza she mentions that the girl is now constantly praising him and uttering his names. Then she leads up to her main point.

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by witchcraft' (also Kanarese and Telugu combine 'to tie, bind' with 'to bewitch'). She is also mentioned in CTMaṭ 20, on which see below.

[167] 5: *tavaḷam poṭi*, 6: *tamar aṭi nīṟu*; Aṇṇa. 'dust from the feet of his devotees'. Compare TVM IV, 6, 5f and CTMaṭ 9 on the use of dust in this ritual.

[168] See above for instance II, 4, 1 and IV, 4, 4f. In a sense, already the archaic custom contains the dialectics: the illness, which may be 'mental perturbation' or 'derangement', is cured by means of a frenzied dance which also, even etymologically, implies a similar 'mental derangement'. This could be paraphrased by saying that the ritually enacted 'perturbation' is the cure for the real 'perturbation'.

'Frankly speaking, the way she is now—the beauty of her ornaments, the dress she wears, and her fresh youth[169]—is incomprehensible. She [must have] become immersed in the divine grace of Appaṉ.' (5)[170]

'There are clear traces that she enjoyed all his favours, sinking completely into the divine grace of Kaṇṇaṉ. Her red lip has a soft texture and resembles the *areca* nut—on account of his divine grace' (6).

'This shy girl has embraced Kaṇṇaṉ's lotus feet' (7).

'She [must have] come in touch with Māyaṉ's divine grace; could there be any other reason for her being redolent of beautiful, cool *tulsī*?' (10)

All this by no means suggests that the girl is now in a state of complete happiness, for the friend asks twice: 'What can I do for her?' (1f) thereby suggesting that the girl needs help.[171] Already in V, 5 we have seen that even actual union involves pain and suffering.

This concludes our discussion of the twenty-three 'girl poems' found in the TVM. As a provisional summary we can say that the focal point of all poems is the emotions of the girl—a projection of the *bhakta* on to the plane of poetry[172]—who is madly in love with Kṛṣṇa. Whether the girl experiences complete union with Kṛṣṇa (only rarely suggested), or whether she feels that he has abandoned her, agony and suffering pervade all her feelings. I have tried to explain this by using the notion of 'symbol': however much the girl may be aware of Kṛṣṇa's presence in any of the symbols, her mortal frame does not allow her to transcend the symbol itself and reach out for the transcendental Kṛṣṇa symbolized by it. But it is worth noting that nowhere has it been suggested that this physical frame is something that can be or ought to be abandoned. The girl suffers, because her contingent existence is

169 According to the commentators this implies that she looks all neat and tidy again.

170 *Puṉaiy iḻaikaḷ aṇivum āṭaiy uṭaiyum putu kkaṇippum niṉaiyum nīrmaiy at' aṉr ivaṭk' itu niṉru niṉaikka ppukkāl. . . Appaṉ tiruv aruḷ mūḻkiṉaḷē.*

171 We would arrive at a similar result by analysing the theme of 'praising and uttering Kṛṣṇa's name constantly' (apart from the present song it occurs in VII, 2, and also in VI, 5, 6 and VI, 7, 7). It occurs both when Kṛṣṇa is present and when he is absent; it is a form of bhakti both as *upāya* and *upeya* (compare note 97 above). Veṅkaṭanātha (*Rahasyatrayasāram*, chapter IX, p. 363) says that bhakti as *upeya* can express itself in forms of 'service (which would include praise and uttering His names)'—*ivvanubhavattiṉuṭaiya parīvāham āy kkoṇṭu kaiṅkaryam upeyam.*

172 It is essential to remember that the girl is a *poetic symbol*, just as all other paraphernalia in these songs possess primarily a *poetic autonomy*; compare 4.325.1.

never questioned. Before we try to discuss some of these aspects more systematically, we must look at three further songs in which 'the girl' appears projected on to the mythical plane, viz. as the *gopī of Vṛndāvana*.

(4). *The gopī poems and Nammāḻvār's approach to myth* Frequently in the previous pages mention has been made of different symbolic autonomous systems (the 'landscapes') which have to be differentiated in Tamil cultural awareness.[173] The poet could choose any of them and communicate according to its self-contained sign-structure. That the Āḻvār placed such heavy emphasis on the structure involving 'the girl' may surprise us, if judged in terms of Sanskritic culture, but should hardly be a mystery when seen in the light of the Tamil literary tradition. Nevertheless, he was not unaware of that symbolic structure which we call myth and which has been the only frame in which the Northern sources have presented emotionalism. For a Southern poet or *bhakta* this mythological approach created problems; significantly not a single poem so far discussed in 3.00 or 4.00 above has used mythical events on the level of its plot. A Southern author would automatically tend to think and feel in terms of *akattiṇai* (or epic) symbolism, and when he has myth in mind he tends to apostrophize the myth's actor. As far as we know, Nammāḻvār was the first Tamil poet to experiment with poems that have a Kṛṣṇaite mythical setting. But, significantly, there are only three such creations in the TVM (and they are not all clearly identifiable as such), and these examples are little more than 'girl poems' given a slightly mythical appearance. As we have seen above,[174] myth is like the temple or poetry a 'symbol' for the Āḻvār, and thus primarily a religious-aesthetic entity. His treatment of the *gopī* episodes follows this principle. But he set an example which later Āḻvārs imitated and elaborated upon, until in Periyâḻvār only the mythical poem, not the 'girl poem', appears. Already in IV, 2 we noticed a correlation between the girl's and Māyōṉ's mythical loves.

[173] The variety of these planes was particularly cumbersome for the interpretation of the *Āycciyarkuravai*, where we had an epic, a poetic, a mythical, and a real structure to deal with.

[174] See 4.324.2 end.

VI, 2 The *gopīs* scold Kṛṣṇa[175] for his mischievous and deceitful behaviour. In 10 they speak of themselves as 'cowherd girls', and in 2 and 4 they refer to Kṛṣṇa's herding the cows, and in 2 to his playing the flute; this allows us to identify the girls as *gopīs*. On the other hand, the Āḻvār conceives of them as girls in a Southern village: they play with balls and shells (1), keep parrots and *mina* birds (5), dolls (6f), and build 'small houses' (9).[176] The song shows great insight into the psychology of young girls; it indicates the many complexities and shades of their sentiments: embarrassment at Kṛṣṇa's advances, (half-pretended) innocence and annoyance, unconscious or at least hidden infatuation, hurt feelings, anger, jealousy because of his fickle-mindedness, a pseudo-mature poised 'wisdom' which pretends to know now everything about him, and a secret yearning and begging for his love. All this is woven around the key-phrase 'go away!' They don't want him, because he is full of 'tricks' (3.5), 'tells lies' (4f), 'acts irresponsibly' (6), and does 'mischief' (7). A few lines may illustrate this poem:

Go away and stay away; blow your flute where its music can fill the ears [of those other girls] who resemble big peacocks with nice wheels, and who enjoy your favours! (2)

You don't have to tell lies, sir; earth and heaven know too well about your tricks. You do just what you like, but I tell you one thing: don't play with our parrots and *mina* birds that repeat [all the words they hear from you], since those [girls] who enjoy your favours would get upset in their minds [when the birds tell them]. (5)

With your sacred foot you destroyed the 'small houses' and the food we were making [of sand], to get us caught in the net of your large lotus eyes and to have us melt inside our hearts in great bliss. (9)

It appears that we can identify the Āḻvār's model of inspiration for the theme of stanza 9. *Kalittokai* 51 describes an equally naughty boy (though obviously in a 'poetic' setting):

He destroyed with his foot the "small houses" of sand, when we were playing on the road; he removed the flower-garland we were wearing, snatched our

[175] Note that in the girl songs the girl practically never addresses Kṛṣṇa directly. Thus we could almost say that for the Āḻvār, myth is that plane on which the girl can speak to Kṛṣṇa personally.

[176] Compare on this theme NTM III and *Kali.* 51 (discussed below). Some of the items mentioned are found in the girl poems.

ball that had lines on it, and ran away—he the small rowdy full of tricks. (. . .) He looked at me with sidelong glances as if he wanted to kill me, and this thievish boy made us both unite in his smile.[177]

This parallel shows how the Āḻvār approaches the mythical episodes with the poetic symbols of the *akattiṇai*; for this reason I have described the latter's function as an ideology.[178] On the full implications of this see below.

IX, 9 The *mudrikā* describes the song as 'lament of a cowherd girl who in the evening could not support her soul in her separation from Him' (11). Stanza 5 speaks of the 'evening, the time of driving the cattle home', and 5.8.9 refer to Kṛṣṇa's playing of the flute when returning home with the cows. The Āḻvār may have adopted the situation from the *Āycciyarkuravai*: 'Would we not hear the sweet flute in His mouth when he comes home today with our herds of cows.'[179] But significantly, the Āḻvār transforms the theme into one of 'separation', which he achieves by (a) bringing the *akattiṇai* to bear upon the song and (b) making it very similar to his 'girl poems'. At this stage I point out only the flowers of the *mullai* landscape: *mallikai* 'jasmine' (1.10), *mullai* (2), *karumukai* (7).[180] Although Kṛṣṇa has returned, he does not come to the particular *gopī* who is speaking.[181] 'How could I survive here, separated from Him?' (10) She reminisces over her past affair with Kṛṣṇa:

Māyōṉ embraced me, clasped my breasts and shoulders, and then abandoned me. I know of no place where I could go, alone (1).

He embraced me so painfully hard that my breasts lost their firmness and my thin waist became even thinner; having penetrated me, the thief just abandoned me (3).

The bee—the god with the Bird—has sucked the honey out of me; my womanhood now resembles a flower [left equally emptied] (4).

The wicked deed of Our Kaṇṇaṉ—to unite with me and then to abandon me—is more cruel than Kaṇṇaṉ himself (8).

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[177] *Teruvil nām āṭum (1) maṇaṟ cirr'il kaliṟ citaiyā aṭaicciya (2) kōtai parintu vari ppantu koṇṭ' ōṭi (3) notakka ceyyuñ ciṟu paṭṭi . . . (4) . . . ennai (14) kkaṭai kkaṇāṟ kolaivāṅ pōl nōkki nakai kkūṭṭañ (15) ceytāṉ akkaḷvaṉ makaṉ (16).*

[178] See pp. 148f. and 3.74.

[179] *Aycciyar*. 8]a.

[180] See note 123.

[181] 'Māyōṉ has not come' in 2f, 9f.

The *gopī*'s natural environment intensifies her suffering: 'The southern breeze, fragrant with *mallikai*, cuts me to pieces. The lovely clouds, reddish at sunset, tear open my body' (1). 'His melodious flute breaks me apart' (5). 'The fine cows copulated with the strong bull, so that the big bell [around his neck] was tinkling; now they are coming here in great joy. Alas!' (10) This is what is happening at the same time:

> I cannot live because of the melodious flute he is playing, while confessing again and again [his love to the other *gopīs*].
>
> Of a beauty created by Himself, he makes the eyes his messengers, speaks through them. Casting glances, he makes his sweet words a tune, and shows his fascination on his face. Then he sings, and ends the love-quarrel of his girls (9).

On the whole, the parallels to the 'girl poems' should be obvious, particularly with V, 4. Stanza 3 gives as a link to V, 5: 'His eyes like lotuses, his red mouth, his rich black locks, his shoulders—they stay in my mind and are sawing me apart.'

X, 3 Stanza 3 says 'me a lowborn person, born in this *Āykulam* (= Gokula/Vraja) as a cowherd girl.'[182] Here the situation is that the *gopī* speaks of her loneliness, her 'separation', during the daytime, when Kṛṣṇa has gone out with the cows—a painful experience for her which is repeated every day. But other emotions enter here as well: anger about Kṛṣṇa's lies (4), jealousy because of the many other girls he likes (6), fear that he might come to harm in the wild forest (7–10). As long as she can see him, she does not even mind if he has other girls with him (8), and would even be happy if that makes *him* happy (9).

Stanza 5 may illustrate the *mullai* setting of the song:

> My soul gets burning hot each time I think about your words to me.
> Kaṇṇaṉ, you left me alone and went to herd the cows during the day.
> When the north wind blows, carrying the *mallikai* blossoms loosened from the twigs, the evening comes too, like a black elephant. Please, let my fine breasts become fragrant with the *mullai* flowers on your chest that is adorned by the Jewel, give me to drink the nectar of your mouth, and beautify the head of me, your slave, with the large lovely lotus, your hand. (5)

We have here a cluster of at least six *mullai karus*; cows and Kaṇṇaṉ (as also 'cowherd girl' who is speaking) are natural to the plot

[182] In the *mudrikā* we hear: 'these ten stanzas which were thought out by the cowherd girls' (11).

itself. *Mallikai*, *mullai*, evening, and north wind are added to tie the poem firmly to the 'jasmine landscape'. This song and IX, 9 are the closest to the *akattiṇai* among the twenty-six love-poems in the TVM. Nammāḻvār thus continues the approach to Kṛṣṇa myths which has been illustrated in the *Āycciyarkuravai* and the bull-baiting poems of the *Kalittokai*; but most important is the fact that he now does full justice to the specific *mullai uri*, the lonely waiting of a girl, and at the same time to Kṛṣṇa as transcendental god.

As in the girl poems, these three mythological songs focus on the emotions of a *gopī*; they aim at fully exploiting in poetic manner the emotions inherent in the myth.[183] It may be appropriate now to analyse very briefly what Nammāḻvār says about myth elsewhere. I have selected three songs to illustrate this.

I, 3 The content of this song is appropriately summarized by Maṇavāḷa mā muṉi:

> Paraṉ (=the transcendental God) is always easy to reach for those who have bhakti in Him, because he takes birth [on earth].[184]

The significance of 'incarnation' cannot be stated more simply. Kṛṣṇa's manifestations on earth constitute the means to reach him the Absolute through bhakti. The Āḻvār puts it like this:

> Easy to reach for those who have *pattu* (<*bhakti*), and impossible for all others, is Vittakaṉ (the unpredictable one).
>
> O what helplessness! when he was weeping, fettered around his waist and tied to a mortar, since he had stolen the butter churned by whirling so hard the churning stick. (1)

Then in the third stanza the Āḻvār asks: 'Who are they who could understand the *māyā* of great Nāraṇaṉ?' Thus his helplessness, his weeping, and his stealing the butter are acts of *māyā* performed on earth. Since they transcend any human understanding, they are the fullest visible symbol of Kṛṣṇa's own nature as Paraṉ; at the same time, they constitute for the *bhakta* the door through which he can reach out for the transcendental. Bhakti could thus be defined as the attitude of total openness to the *māyā* Kṛṣṇa mani-

[183] It is interesting to note that the TVM appears to contain only three mythical songs, and all of them deal with the *gopīs*. The later Āḻvārs will show a similar bias for these episodes. Compare IV, 2.

[184] TVMNū 3: *Patt' uṭaiyōrkk' eṉṟum Paraṉ eḷiyaṉ ām piṟappāl.*

fests, of letting it play havoc with the mind and the emotions. The girl poems have shown us all that this implies. Myth now is the record of such past deeds of *māyā* on earth in special manifestations of Kṛṣṇa, and by opening himself to the *māyā* contained in these records, the Āḻvār realizes bhakti.

V, 10 The *bhakta* who opens himself to the myth, and receives from it the *māyā* it contains, in Nammāḻvār's awareness, is touched thereby predominantly in the emotive spheres of his being, and experiences the blissful agony of 'the girl'.

> The way in which you were born, grew up, and all your miraculous deeds—how you brought into array the armies during the great Bhārata battle (. . .)—they have entered right into my bosom, and remaining there constantly make my life melt away. (1)[185]

The emotional impact described here resembles the girl's experience of Kṛṣṇa (VII, 7), that of the *gopī* (IX, 9, 3), and the girl's experience of the temple-god (V, 5). Like the god in the temple or the lover in the poetry, Kṛṣṇa and all his deeds recorded in the myths are beautiful and cause the same emotional reactions: the heart melts away (3f.9f), it becomes like wax in fire (5), tears flow (8). The similarities of these experiences are so close[186] that to think about what Kṛṣṇa did in the past merges with thinking about what he does to the *bhakta* at present:

> I have become feeble in my mind[187] which makes me think about the things you have done to me: you come as sweetness and truth, remain with me as darkness and brilliant light,[188] and unite with me without my eyes being able to see you (7).[189]

Thus both the god of myth and of the heart evade actual sight: 'Kindly grant to my eyes one day your sacred beauty, for them to see it truly!' (7)[190] *Māyā* thus means precisely to be present and make that presence felt in emotional agitation, and yet to evade

185 *Piranta^{v} ārum vaḷarnta^{v} ārum periya Pāratam kai ceytu. . .ceytu pōna māyaṅkaḷum niran tan ūṭu pukk' enat' āviyai ninru ninr' urukki^{y} uṅkinra.*

186 Compare above TVM VI, 9, 2.

187 The context implies: 'because I meditate constantly on your mythical deeds'.

188 Compare VII, 2, 7: 'You gave happiness and misery to me (=the girl)'.

189 *Oṉ cuṭarōṭ' iruḷum āy ninra^{v} ārum uṇmaiyōṭ' inmai^{y}āy vantu en kaṇ koḷā vakai nī karant' ennai cceykinraṇa eṇ koḷ cintaiyuḷ naikinrēn.*

190 *En kaṇkaṭku ttiṇ koḷḷa^{v} oru nāḷ aruḷāy un tiru^{v} uruvē.*

(as transcendental being) all comprehension—by the senses, the emotions, or the intellect.

VI, 4 A less agonized note is struck here; at times the awareness of the limitations of all 'symbols' recedes, and *māyā* creates great bliss and freedom. The emotions then concentrate on that Kṛṣṇa 'who through his own will (*tāṉ*) was born in the defiled caste (*cāti*) of humans' (7). The Āḻvār says:

> Do we have any need of anything? We do not distinguish night from day, muttering about the miraculous deeds of Pirāṉ, his dancing the *kuravai* with the cowherd girls. . . (1)[191]
>
> Could the whole world equal the time I spend in great love melting away in my mind and thinking of the deeds of Pirāṉ, beautiful and full of wonders —how he blows the flute softly to the songs, his union with the shoulders of Piṉṉai who has flashing carp-like eyes and locks full of fragrant flowers, these and many other deeds! (2)[192]

He speaks of 'constant enjoyment' (3f), 'singing day and night' (6), his 'heart seeing the mysterious deeds' (8). In 4 he mentions again Kṛṣṇa's 'divine beauty'. Practically every stanza contains the word *māyā*, which thus could be described as Kṛṣṇa's own beauty which in turn radiates and beautifies everything else in the myth as well: Piṉṉai, the music of the flute, the *kuravai*, etc., and thereby makes the myth itself a container of that beauty.

To recreate the *māyā* in all its aspects which are manifested in the myths, the Āḻvār needs poetry, the autonomous laws of beauty and emotion inherent in which allow him to heighten the beauty and emotion of the myth. I think the three *gopī* poems have clearly illustrated this.

4.325 *Systematic evaluation*

I think there can be no objection to describing Caṭakōpaṉ as an 'inspired' writer (in our sense of the word). Never at rest in his emotions or thoughts, he constantly struggles with the mysterious, trying to grasp it in never-ending dialectics; he gropes for words and symbols to express his innermost and contradictory sentiments,

191 *Kuravaiy āycciyarōṭu kōttatum. . .Pirāṉ taṉ māya viṉaikaḷaiyē alaṟṟi iravu naṉ pakalum tavirkilam, eṉṉa kuṟai namakkē?*

192 *Kēya ttīṅ kuḻal ūtiṟṟum. . .keṇṭaiy oṇ kaṇ vāca ppūṅ kuḻal Piṉṉai tōḷkaḷ maṇantatum maṟṟum pala māya kkōla ppirāṉ taṉ ceykai niṉaintu maṉaṅ kuḻaintu nēyattōṭu kaḻinta pōt' eṉakku evvulakam nikarē.*

and attempts to transcend the painful limitations of the natural order with reference to the transcendental Kṛṣṇa, by exposing himself completely to that very pain. The richness and variety of his language and symbolic repertoire is matched by the intensity with which he explores every corner of his emotions, and in the final analysis his greatness lies in his total surrender to the impossible: to reach out for the transcendental while fully immersed in the natural order, or in his own words 'to see Kṛṣṇa with his eyes'.[193]

Nammāḻvār is not a 'philosopher' or systematic thinker; the basic structure of his religious thought and sentiment will have to be developed by painstaking analysis of the symbols of his poetry, the fragments of thought scattered over it, the direct and indirect allusions to other literary or religious works, and the recurrent features that suggest something like a system. Although clearly differentiated by formal characteristics, the girl and *gopī* poems form an organic part of the whole of the TVM, a study of which whole could alone provide a sufficient basis for a comprehensive discussion of Nammāḻvār's religion. All this is clearly impossible to achieve within the limited scope of our present investigation, and instead I can do no more than summarize here, in a very provisional, tentative, and selective manner, what appear to me to be the essential features of the material presented in the previous pages. I hope nevertheless that it will thereby be possible to gain an initial insight into the fascinating religious cosmos of this Āḻvār and to determine his historical significance.

(1) *Symbol and symbolic structure* The key notions which I have used time and again in the previous pages in order conceptually to grasp Nammāḻvār's religious and poetic cosmos have been:

[193] This evaluation of Nammāḻvār agrees with his fame in Śrīvaiṣṇava circles. Thus it is quite remarkable to find that the Jesudasans have nothing more to say about the TVM than: 'The bulk of Tiruvāymoli of 1102 stanzas is interpreted as showing the joy of god-realisation. His [=the Āḻvār's] expression, however, fails to penetrate.' (1961, p. 115) About the poet they say: 'In general, he is one whose literary worth belies his reputation.' (ibid.) and 'For all the emphasis laid on his greatness, the man of literary tastes does not find much to relish in his work. His diction is essentially unpoetic and artificial. Hardly any intensity of feeling shows itself here. The tone is mainly argumentative and philosophical. Few indeed are his purely poetic virtues.' (pp. 114f) The most charitable comment on such judgements made in a 'History of Tamil Literature' may be *de gustibus non est disputandum.*

symbol and symbolic structure; metaphor and simile are closely related terms which operate exclusively on the linguistic plane. These concepts, I believe, provide us with a useful overall frame of reference by means of which something of the bewildering variety of the Āḻvār's mind and sentiments can be sorted out. But before we can pursue this analysis, an important question raises itself: is there any notion which in the Āḻvār's own—conceptual or poetic—language correlates to our terms 'symbol' etc.? I think that *māyā* (Tamil *māyai* and *māyam*, also *māl*) constitutes as close an approximation as we require. Now one could say that *māyā* is simply related to our 'symbol'. This could be justified since both terms can be defined as sign-systems intervening between, representing in concrete terms, and pointing at, something that is signified by them without being directly perceptible or available. After all, *māyā* is the veil that covers the transcendental Kṛṣṇa. However, to approach *māyā* thus means obliterating a number of its other aspects which cannot be associated with the notion 'symbol'; since *māyā* is clearly dynamic, I prefer to define 'symbol' as the *container* or vehicle of *māyā*.

Already the Early Āḻvārs conceived of Kṛṣṇa's *māyā* as the contradiction between his divine nature and his earthly manifestations, as the mystery in the different manifestations themselves, and as fascinating beauty. They also had begun to encounter this *māyā* in the mystical emotional experience: although Kṛṣṇa (ontologically) indwells the heart, he evades (psychologically) any comprehension. With Nammāḻvār, the emotional impact of *māyā* becomes fully realized: Kṛṣṇa's indwelling in the heart is 'confusion' (*māl*),[194] just as the myths, describing contradictory incidents, contain *māyā*.[195] The girl sinks into Kṛṣṇa's *māyā*, which robs her of all control. More precisely, his *māyā* consists of first making the girl infatuated and then withdrawing from her. Yet it is always also attraction (in both senses of the word) and fascination, causing bliss and ecstasy. *Māyā* is the mode in which Kṛṣṇa appears in the world of space, time, and matter, and the symbols and symbolic structures are centres where *māyā* appears in a more concentrated and intensive manner.

In the previous pages a number of such symbols have been

[194] PTAnt 2.
[195] PTAnt 5; TVM VI, 9, 2.

analysed. It has not been my aim to provide a comprehensive catalogue of them, but simply to select the more important ones with direct emotional implications.[196] Thus we have encountered: the temple-image, myth, the heart, poetry, 'nature', 'society'. The last three occur for the first time in Nammāḻvār, while the first three figure already in the Early Āḻvārs. Within all of them, the Āḻvār experiences in some form Kṛṣṇa's *māyā*, and we can describe the function of a symbol as stimulating the emotional impact of *māyā*. Without wanting to place too much emphasis on it, I have distinguished symbols and symbolic structures, which means (to put it crudely) that 'parrot' would be a symbol, and a girl poem a symbolic structure. Needless to add that the symbol, because of the function of the structure within which it occurs, triggers off the ecstatic experience.

Two further aspects are important in Nammāḻvār: *hierarchy* and *autonomy* of the symbolic systems.

Hierarchy The basic level (*the first order*) is constituted by given symbols: Kṛṣṇa's presence in the heart, in the temple, and in the myths. On the whole, the Āḻvār accepts this situation without speculating about the how and why.[197] However, in one place[198] he shows (although within the poetic frame) that he is aware of the rôle of society in providing these given symbols: 'It was you yourself (=mother) who took her (=girl) to the temple and pointed out how Pirāṉ stood there: with eyes like red lotuses. . .' These first order symbols, given by society to the Āḻvār, constitute the basis of his religious experience, and in so far as they are given, we can speak of the Āḻvār having a *passive* relationship (see below on this). The relationship turns into an *active* one, when our poet decides to communicate his experiences (in the widest sense), for which purpose he resorts to language (*the second order* sign system).[199]

[196] Theological thought, so widely expressed in the songs of Nammāḻvār, has thus been generally excluded here. It quite clearly qualifies as symbolic structure containing Kṛṣṇa's *māyā*, but its emotional impact is of a secondary nature.

[197] In the Āḻvār's awareness, the temple-image *is* Kṛṣṇa (though as lord of *māyā*), and what we would call myth is for him what Kṛṣṇa did in the past. I have not come across any theory about the *arcâvatāra* or about myth. TVM I, 3 is a piece of theology, and not concerned with such questions as how we *come to know* of such mythical events.

[198] TVM VI, 5, 5.

[199] This is when he speaks directly and without any literary conceit; these are the theological songs (see note 196).

But significantly, he does not stop here (as the Early Āḻvārs did), but proceeds to create one further system (thus *the third order* structure) which I have styled the *poetic level*. That is, he employs a conceit to frame the plot of a song, and abstracts from his own individual I. Historically speaking, this can be described more simply: the Āḻvār employed the *akattiṇai* structure.

Autonomy Nobody would doubt that the word 'lotus' denotes the flower only *as a whole word*, and not by its individual phonemes. Applied to the present issue this means that the second order system is autonomous in relation to that of the first order. Logically, this ought to be postulated also for the third order system. Yet we hear of 'the soul's longing for union with Viṣṇu'[200] which means that *one* individual symbol of the third order structure (viz. 'the girl') is directly equated with *one* element of the second order level (viz. 'the soul'), in other words, the autonomy is destroyed. The hierarchical concatenation of symbolic structures certainly implies an *analogy* between them (the word 'lotus' is analogous to the flower 'lotus'), but only in so far as the autonomy of each level is preserved is there any sense at all in the very existence of such separate levels, which sense is their *functional differentiation*. In other words, if 'girl' is allegorical for 'soul', why should the Āḻvār have chosen this indirect manner of speaking? He might as well have said 'soul'. I think Caṭakōpaṉ makes it quite clear in his TVir that he is aware precisely of this autonomy of the love poems. The 'he' and 'she' are in that poetry the phonemes of poetic language, and only their relationship as a whole, the word, refers back analogically to what the poetic structure signifies: religious sentiments. I am convinced that even where we do not find the pattern (she : he)⟶Kṛṣṇa, as in the TVM and parts of the TVir, the significance of the girl has not fundamentally changed. She is still an actor in the *akattiṇai*, which as we have seen, functions as communicating the *akam*.

(2) *The emotional response to the symbols: passive bhakti* Having established the theoretical frame, we can now proceed to look at the concrete factors that fill it. Already above[201] I have suggested that 'bhakti' in Nammāḻvār could be defined as total loving openness to Kṛṣṇa's *māyā*. More precisely, we can say that it means

[200] Jesudasan, 1961, p. 115; comp. 4.241, note 103.
[201] *Ad* TVM I, 3.

exposing oneself to the symbols which contain it. The Early Āḻvārs prepared the ground for this; like theirs, Nammāḻvār's ultimate aspiration is 'to see Kṛṣṇa'. New with him is the complete surrender to the emotional impact of these symbols, what I have styled ecstasy. Ecstatic response is the red thread that runs through the whole hierachy of symbolic structures, and constitutes its *analogia*. But the most crucial point is that for Nammāḻvār ecstasy always also involves agony. My choice of the one word 'ecstasy' to denote both 'ecstatic bliss' and 'agony' derives from a literal interpretation: *ek* + *stasis*, to be outside onself, which means both to break through the depressing limitations of one's normal existence (bliss) and to be broken apart (agony). Similarly, as we have seen, the description of the psychological symptoms of ecstasy does not differentiate the bliss and the agony elements.

His metaphorical language suggests a number of models for how to conceive of this 'painful ecstasy'. I have noted the following: (1) The mystical relish causes pain because it takes the *bhakta* out of an environment dear to him.[202] (2) Temporal fluctuation between 'union' and 'separation'.[203] (3) Disease and possession being closely connected in the Tamil awareness and ecstasy being a kind of possession by *māl*/Māl, the love for Māl is a disease.[204] (4) Spatial separation.[205]

This is the commonest model found in the poems. Along with the related No. 2, these models derive from the *mullaittiṇai*; if we accept my definition of the *akattiṇai* as an associative structure or ideology, there should be no problem here in assuming that in fact the *mullaittiṇai* is in some way involved in the Āḻvār's experience itself.[206] It may now be useful to try and abstract from these models, and to explain the dimension of 'agony' without using

[202] E.g., PTAnt 68: 'o alas! like grass they disappear. . .' Or TVM V, 5 where within the poetic frame the girl suffers because her love has cut her off from society.

[203] This means: Kṛṣṇa first 'unites', causing infatuation, and then vanishes. See, for example, TVM VI, 8.

[204] On the poetic level, this is the mother's and the friend's interpretation. 'Disease of love' occurs, for example, in TVM II, 1, 9f; IV, 6.

[205] Implied, for the *bhakta*, in 'I am here, but my heart is there'; for the girl in 'Kṛṣṇa has not come', 'he has abandoned me', etc.

[206] I leave the sentence intentionally vague. It is for the social psychologist to decide to what extent actual experience is conditioned by (unconscious) associations, culture-specific symbols, etc.

metaphorical language. It is here that the notion 'symbol' can profitably be used. A symbol is characterized by the fact that it at the same time contains and is void of the object symbolized; a symbol of Kṛṣṇa contains his *māyā*, but is empty of the transcendental Kṛṣṇa. A complete emotional experience of these symbols must therefore share in precisely this ambivalence, and agony arises because Kṛṣṇa always stays at a distance from the symbol.[207]

From the historical perspective, we see how Caṭakōpaṉ continued the trends documented in the *Early Antâtis*. There we encountered an inchoate perception of the ambivalent nature of *māyā* and the desire to see and to relish Kṛṣṇa's beauty including that manifest in the symbols of the heart, myth, or temple; we saw the desire emotionally to 'unite' with them, and how at least the phraseology implied a latent eroticism, sexual union. Nammāḻvār realizes the full implications of this attitude: Kṛṣṇa can be relished in his symbols, but this relish is at the same time pain. In terms of erotic language, not sexual union but separation is the appropriate situation. The initial optimistic drive towards Kṛṣṇa by means of the emotions has led, in Nammāḻvār, to the painful discovery that because the natural order allows for only a symbolic presence of Kṛṣṇa, the emotions cannot fully or permanently grasp him.

(3) *Creative expression of experience: active bhakti* However, the realization of the ambivalent nature of the given symbols, particularly the element of suffering, does not lead the Āḻvār to a passive resignation or to despair. On the contrary, it stimulates an active and creative attitude, the concrete expression of which is his poetry. It is not necessary to distinguish in the following between poetry which employs an *akattiṇai* setting and that which has a mythical plot. The three *gopī*-songs are so intrinsically structured according to the *akam* conventions that myth cannot really be assumed to function as an independent associative structure or creative model for the Āḻvār. His third order symbolic system is fundamentally derived from the *akattiṇai* tradition. We have already analysed the theoretical basis of this creative process (which the Āḻvār

[207] As in the previous note I cannot discuss the general problem of how far the contents of belief or dogmas (here: the transcendence of Kṛṣṇa as absolute God) have an influence on spontaneous experience. Personally I think that 'pain' is primarily given by the Āḻvār's spontaneous experience, and that where he resorts to dogma he is trying to explain.

himself also attributes to Kṛṣṇa's agency[208]), but we must look now at the rationale underlying the creation of the third order poetic structure. Superficially we can say that the Āḻvār but continues the cultural tradition of the *akattiṇai* by employing it in some of his songs. This cultural tradition had, as we have seen above in 3.00, a tendency to approach Māyōṉ through the *akattiṇai*, and in this sense the Āḻvār achieved a synthesis (which for Murukaṉ was found already in *Pari.* VIII) of these trends. It is certainly correct to argue thus, since only Nammāḻvār belonged to the Pāṇṭiya country for which a continued functioning of the *akattiṇai* ideology has been postulated. But we must see in the love songs of the TVM more than a *formal* confirmation of a tradition. After all, Nammāḻvār has clearly struggled with this form (see in particular the variety of approaches in the TVir), and the love songs in the TVM bear the stamp of his own creative adaptation of the *akattiṇai* tradition. Thus we can safely postulate a *conscious purpose* behind the formal adoption of the *akattiṇai*. This functional purpose is most easily described by saying that the concrete *tiṇai* is artistically employed to lay bare (and communicate) the *akam*, the inner world of emotions.[209] Thus the autonomy of the poetic system lies precisely in its specific function. The Āḻvār is not content with speaking *about* his love for, and the ecstasy caused by, Māyōṉ, but he aims at directly communicating (in a *rasa*-like manner) these emotions. Considering the importance of emotionalism with him, this does not surprise us. *De facto* his love-songs become a *created* symbol of Kṛṣṇa, for what other emotional content do they convey than that of the other symbols—Kṛṣṇa's *māyā*?[210] In so far as these songs relate to the Āḻvār, they are his effort to create *new* symbols of Kṛṣṇa for him to relish:[211] but since no individual I, only a *universal* she and Kṛṣṇa, appear in the poems, the symbol is accessible *to all bhaktas*. Using now the Āḻvār's own religious interpretation, we can say that the specific

[208] In song VII, 9.

[209] Similarly, Sanskrit poeticians realized that a simple statement of an emotion does not by itself stimulate this in the listener. It requires, in their terminology, the poetic *vibhāvas*, *anubhāvas*, and *vyabhicārīs* to release the *bhāva* as *rasa* in the audience. The functional conjunction is similar to the Tamil 'landscapes'.

[210] Compare TVM V, 2, on poetry (in general) as a symbol of Kṛṣṇa.

[211] See above VII, 9; not only *is* Kṛṣṇa the song, but the creation of it is also through Kṛṣṇa.

emotions contained in and conveyed by these songs *are* what Kṛṣṇa has to say about Himself.[212] He *is* the song and is therefore experienced by the listening *bhakta*; the *rasa*-like sentiment engendered by the song is therefore the modality in which Kṛṣṇa can be comprehended: He is comprehended as 'happiness and misery'[213] and as 'the union and separation of lovers';[214] these pairs denote the emotional impact of his (symbolic) *presence*.[215] Once this is accepted, the interpretation of the various factors constituting the poetic symbolic structure becomes solely a question of the *mechanics* of poetic creation. This need concern us here only marginally. Thus we can say that in designing his poetic landscape, the Āḻvār employs *inter alia* elements of the *real* landscape filled with their Kṛṣṇa temples, of *real* nature[216] or of society. The *uris* relate to his own emotions[217]—which through the poetry he tries to *convey* and not simply *describe*. The girl too is fundamentally an aesthetic stimulant; her relation to 'reality' (by which is meant the Āḻvār's 'store of building material') can be described as universalized, just as in classical *caṅkam* style we have only the 'she'. But it is essential to note that the concrete and individual which is universalized in the symbol of the 'she' is not an ethereal monad, idea, or 'soul',[218] but a whole human being, physical and emotional—swooning, sweating, weeping, and dancing. The spiritualization implied in the allegorical interpretation murders the most fundamental characteristic of the Āḻvār's religious awareness.

To conclude: bhakti with Nammāḻvār is both a passive surrender to the presence of Kṛṣṇa's *māyā* and, impelled by this experience, an active cultivation of the emotional impact by creating new

[212] See TVM VII, 9: *taṉṉai . . . pāṭiya* 'singing (about) himself'. This also means that for the Āḻvār, Kṛṣṇa is predominantly ecstasy.

[213] TVM VII, 2, 7.

[214] TVM VI, 3, 4 *puṇarcci piriv' eṉṟ' ivaiyāy*. *Puṇarcci* 'union' and *pirivu* 'separation' are the common terms used in *akam* poetics.

[215] Thus 'separation' is not to be taken literally (viz. in an ontological sense), but only as a metaphor (or model) suggesting the element of pain in the experience.

[216] 'Nature' occurs almost exclusively in the love poems; the Āḻvār is clearly not a nature mystic, but is aware of it only in so far as it figures in the autonomous *akattiṇai* structure. However in view of PTAnt 49 and 73, we should not put it that strictly: 'nature' in the girl poems stimulates an emotion which the Āḻvār himself experiences from nature.

[217] Compare TVM V, 2 and 8, VI, 9 and VII, 7; V, 5.

[218] Nobody would doubt this for the 'she' in classical *caṅkam* love poetry.

symbolic structures (poetry, etc.) which then make the emotions *socially* available. Precisely because Nammāḷvār's bhakti is emotional, and because he wants to communicate these emotions (and not just notions), he had to create his own medium of communication (the third order symbolic structure), viz. love poetry.

(4) *Pattern and context* In Nammāḷvār, practically the whole range of what has been defined as *emotional bhakti* in the strict sense is covered. I have spoken of three different levels on which bhakti is conceived: mysticism (involving the *real bhakta*, here Nammāḷvār and his personal poems), poetry (strictly: the *akattiṇai*, which here occurs in the girl songs), and myth (here: the three *gopī* poems). Predominant emphasis is placed by the Āḻvār upon the poetic level, which is nevertheless intrinsically linked with a specific local cultural tradition. Ultimately this level would have to be abandoned once the *akattiṇai* ceased to function. On the other hand, the mythical plane has as yet hardly any independent existence in Nammāḷvār because he fundamentally conceives of it as *akattiṇai*. Nevertheless, as it is a pan-Indian phenomenon, it will not surprise us that later Āḻvārs (Periyâḻvār in particular) place considerable stress on it. Then I differentiated three psychological states: the ecstatic, the erotic and the aesthetic. Ecstasy is for Nammāḷvār the key theme, fully illustrated on all three planes. Moreover, in the girl and *gopī* songs it is clearly connected with eroticism. Āṇṭāḷ, who was herself a girl, was uniquely able to integrate the erotic and the mystical planes. The aesthetic state is illustrated by the Āḻvār's relish of the symbols, the girl's infatuation with Kṛṣṇa's beauty, and for example, by the *gopīs*' delight in Kṛṣṇa's flute.

We need not repeat here how Nammāḷvār achieved a synthesis of the various trends in earlier *caṅkam* culture. With him Kṛṣṇa is now fully the 'giver of what he symbolizes poetically':[219] separation. But one modification has to be made: there is no evidence that the Āḻvār was directly influenced by the *folk culture* which we assumed for the Pāṇṭiya environment, with its typical treatment of Kṛṣṇa myths (bull-fight, *kuravai*, *kuruntu*). Only in so far as this folk-culture had been treated in *caṅkam* works have we noticed its influence on the Aḻvār. *A fortiori*, this applies to the Āḻvār's

[219] See p. 216

relationship with any of the material analysed in 2.00 above: there is no evidence that he derived inspiration from any of the various Sanskrit and Prakrit sources. Nammāḻvār's roots lie in Southern culture (but excluding the folk culture), which he shows also with regard to elements other than the *akattiṇai*. Thus Kṛṣṇa the girl's lover *lives in* the poetic landscape that is filled with the various temples, and ecstasy is stimulated by the *concrete* symbols—two facets which derive from the chracteristic Tamil awareness which envisages the divine within the confines of empirical sensuous reality. But due to the transcendental awareness which broke into this conception as a later, Northern influence, a dilemma arose, and its emotional repercussion may be detected in that particular form of religious experience styled 'separation'. Again, in his own metaphorical interpretation of ecstasy Nammāḻvār uses the Southern ideas of 'possession' and 'frenzied dance'. The static (ontological) conception of Viṣṇu the *antaryāmī* can at the most be assumed to underlie and facilitate this dynamic possession and frenzy. Abstracting further, a religious humanism or anthropocentricity has appeared as characteristic of Southern civilization. It is only because 'the man of flesh and blood'[220] (and that includes the girl of flesh and blood) remained aware of himself as such and retained this self-awareness as something naturally given, unquestionable, and positive, that the emotional religion entails the pain of separation. There is no agony in *yoga* (including *bhakti-yoga*), because there is no emotive prefiguration of *kaivalya* which would entail the painful awareness of not yet having realized it, because senses and emotions are factors that are eliminated right at the start of the exercise. For the Āḻvār, the world is full of such prefigurations (in the form of the Kṛṣṇa symbols), and in never-ending dialectics he moves emotionally between the here and the there. But the here always remains essential: 'to be born (on earth) and become the servant of the Cowherd has indeed the splendour of the real world'[221]—a most striking illustration of Tamil anthropocentricity. With the Early Āḻvārs we still found an ambivalence between *yoga* and emotionalism (in its wider sense) and both figured as the bridges linking the *bhakta* (here) with Kṛṣṇa (there). In Nammāḻvār, the emotions have entirely usurped that function.

[220] See pp. 129.233f.
[221] PTAnt. 79.

Finally, 'the man of flesh and blood' is always also an *animal sociale*, not a loner, a *kaivalī*. The poems of the Early Āḻvārs involved not only the poets and Kṛṣṇa, but also other people, to be addressed or talked about; Nammāḻvār's poetry *conveys* Kṛṣṇa's *māyā* to other *bhaktas*, and the girl struggles with 'society'—scolding it for its ignorance, malice, lack of sympathy, approaching it for help and comfort, and making it responsible for her suffering; society always remains prominent in the girl's (and Āḻvār's) awareness. We could, as a final summary, describe Nammāḻvār as a mystic of the cosmos of the senses: by opening himself to the ravishing beauty they communicate to the emotions, he becomes aware of all the limitations of contingent things, and since for him this beauty is Kṛṣṇa's beauty, the awareness of its limitations is a mysticism of 'separation'—Kṛṣṇa's real beauty transcending all its symbolic manifestations to the senses.

4.33 **Tirumaṅkai-Āḻvār**

With Nammāḻvār, a fascinating architectural structure has been completed. Kalikaṉṟi, the Āḻvār from Tirumaṅkai, elaborates upon this edifice, adding baroque features in places, exuberant and interesting ornamentations, which nevertheless often lack Nammāḻvār's creative vitality, and certainly do not change or transform altogether that Āḻvār's creation. Many of his songs bear the stamp of routine pieces, and relatively few are original when compared with Nammāḻvār. In the following pages, I shall concentrate on precisely that material which we have not found, or not with such emphasis, in Nammāḻvār. Thus we shall notice a certain loosening of the autonomy of the girl songs, the girl referring more directly to the Āḻvār's own emotional ecstasy; however, Parakālaṉ still draws heavily on *caṅkam* poetic material independently of Nammāḻvār. There is also an extension of the mythical genre, while a few songs illustrate an altogether novel type of poetry, the 'folk songs', thus integrating into Kṛṣṇaism the one element which Nammāḻvār had left unexplored. Finally, the poetic landscape in which the girl acts becomes in Parakālaṉ quite decidedly the landscape of the South Indian temples. Of the six works of the Āḻvār, I shall discuss only three, his *magnum opus*, the PTM, and the idiosyncratic *Tirumaṭal* poems which deserve an extensive analysis.

4.331 *The Periyatirumoḻi*

Unlike the TVM, this work shows a clear logical arrangement. Its bulk is constituted by ninety songs (I, 2 to X, 1) which are dedicated to various centres of pilgrimage. Starting with Piriti in the Himalayas and after visiting a few other places in the North, there begins at I, 7 a *pradakṣiṇā* through Soutn India, starting in Tirupati. In Kuṟuṅkuṭi (IX, 5 and 6) the southernmost point is reached, and the *tīrthayātrā* ends in Kōṭṭiyūr (X, 10). Map 5 gives all the details. In X, 1, the pilgrimage is briefly summarized. Songs I, 1 and XI, 8 deal with general themes like Kṛṣṇa's grace and bhakti, and enclose the whole PTM as a frame. The remaining sixteen songs form an appendix to the ninety dealing with the *tīrthayātrā*. X, 2 to 8 are mythical poems (X, 2 and 3 are remarkable dance-songs addressed to Rāma by the defeated Rākṣasas of Laṅkā). X, 9 to XI, 3 are girl poems without reference to Kṛṣṇa's temples. The remaining four songs are of a general nature (XI, 4: the various *avatāras*; 5: antiphonic description of Kṛṣṇa's life in Gokula; 6: censure of people without bhakti to Viṣṇu, here the lord of *pralaya*; 7: fulfilment of senses in bhakti).

In spite of this easily comprehensible arrangement, the material relevant for our discussion has to be drawn from the whole PTM and presents considerable difficulties for a systematic analysis. The songs are less well defined in their poetic genres than in the TVM: the Āḻvār has a tendency to blur formal distinctions. I have nevertheless tried to preserve the arangement used for the discussion of the TVM: (1) the general structure of bhakti, derived from unspecified songs; (2) poems with the girl conceit (which often refer back to personal statements of the Āḻvār, or to *gopī* poems); (3) songs dealing with Kṛṣṇa myths.

(1) *General structure of bhakti* The arrangement of the PTM indicates that Kalikaṉṟi has a sense of order absent in Nammāḻvār; while the latter moves restlessly in never-ending dialectics from one facet of his experience to another, the former brings some system to bear upon his bhakti. I have selected four songs (II, 8; III, 8; VII, 4 and 5) to illustrate the systematized dynamism of emotion. As a general principle we find that the Āḻvār aims at building up the highest possible ecstasy by leading from elements with a fairly low emotional temperature to those of maximal ecstatic

potential. This may be illustrated, first, for mythology. In **III, 8,** the Āḻvār encourages his mind to 'worship the Jewel-Palace temple in Nāṅkūr' (the refrain). Stanzas 1 and 9 (so to speak the frame for the song) specify the god there as the one 'whose praise the gods sing', but stanzas 2 to 8, as the accomplisher of famous mythical deeds; 2 and 3 speak of the Gajendra episode,[1] 4 about Rāma, and 5 to 8 turn to the Vṛndāvana episodes, which (in 8) culminate in the erotic adventures.

> . . .Our lord, who took away the silken dresses of the cowherd girls with soft, black, and curly locks, who destroyed their small houses of sand,[2] and who caused in the adolescent girls a flood of love through his sport. . . (8)

It would then appear from this (and similar[3]) arrangements that for the Āḻvār Māyōṉ's mythical deeds culminate in the *gopī*-episodes, and that these are the most stimulating emotionally. That emotional intensity is in fact the aim of this dynamic arrangement can be inferred also from **II, 8.** The refrain states that the various manifestations, qualities, and religious experiences connected with Māyōṉ (each stanza listing some of these) are found in the 'lord of Aṭṭapuyakaram'.[4] Thus he is described as Nṛsiṃha (1), Vāmana (2), Rāma (2); Kṛṣṇa (no reference to eroticism, 3 and 4); Viṣṇu the revealer of Scripture (5). Now stanzas 6 to 9 turn away from myth altogether and speak about Māyōṉ as the god of beauty

[1] A king had been cursed to become an elephant; when caught by a crocodile he asks Viṣṇu for help, which is promptly granted. See, e.g., BhP VIII, 1, 30ff; 2; 3; 4, 1-26 (compare Appendix XI, 1, No. 2); other places listed in Ramachandra Dikshitar, 1951, vol. I, p. 505. Periyâḻvār II, 10, 8 is unique in including the episode among the Vṛndāvana myths. Other Āḻvārs, like the *Purāṇas*, treat it separately from the whole *Kṛṣṇa-carita* or even the *avatāra*-cycle.

[2] Compare TVM VI, 2, 9, *Kali.* 51, and NTM II.

[3] E.g., XI, 4 (a song about the *avatāras*): fish, tortoise, boar, Nṛsiṃha, Vāmana, Paraśurāma, Rāma (stanzas 1 to 7, the conventional order). Haṃsa in 8 changes the sequence, and Kṛṣṇa appears in the special position of the last stanza. (See also below, under 3).

[4] A temple in Kāñcī; the Tamil spelling hides a Sanskrit *Aṣṭa-bhuja-gṛha*, which is Prakrit *Aṭṭabhuyaghara*: 'the house of (the god with) eight arms'. (See stanza 3 for the eight utensils in the hands of the figure). Now in *Pari.* III, 38 we find *eṉ kaiy ēntal* 'the exalted one with eight arms', which Gros (*ad locum* p. 180) explains as Brahmā with eight arms. If this were the original significance of the *aṭṭapuya* image in Kāñcī, the present song would be an interesting example of the 'Vaiṣṇavisation' of Southern temples. About this temple we have in Sanskrit Venkaṭanātha's *Aṣṭabhujâṣṭakam.*

who causes love and passion. 6: He infatuates 'women': 'Who is he, who (. . .) has entered, so that the bracelets, the minds, and the contentment of women (. . .) all became his?' He enters them, creates confusion, and then by abandoning them makes them suffer in separation (the 'bracelet motif'). 7 and 8: An 'I' speaks of His great beauty (*kōlam*, *eḻil*, *aḻaku*, all in 7). In 9 the emotional impact culminates in a definite 'girl poem':

I am afraid even to ask the question: 'Who is he, because of whom my bracelets won't stay; thinking of whom my heart has become his; who when saying something looks at me so that my waist contracts; whose glances, cast upon me, are full of poison; whose nature I cannot understand?'[5]

It thus appears that the Aḻvār wants to lead his audience from a fairly detached encounter with Viṣṇu, the god in the temple, via the fascinating figure of Kṛṣṇa (the lover of the *gopīs*) to the god of beauty, who dwells in the heart and creates passion and ecstasy. At this stage the Āḻvār resorts to the girl symbolism, and ecstasy culminates in the realization of Māyōṉ's 'poisonous' and incomprehensible nature.

Our assumption of such a pattern is confirmed by **VII, 5**. Describing the figure in Aḻuntūr, the Aḻvār again begins with mythical appearances (Kṛṣṇa, 1f; Rāma 'the strong one', 3), and then turns to the god of mystical ecstasy '. . . who enters and lives in my mind and in my eyes' (4), 'who graciously smiled with his red lips, came close to me, entered my mind, and is abiding there' (6). The Āḻvār goes further: he resorts to erotic language, adopting the girl symbolism: 'who, when evening had come, sat on the bed of flowers and entered my mind; who [now] remains [distant] so that my black eyes shed tears' (7); 'who abides in my dreams to my heart's content, after he embraced me [so firmly] that my creeper-like waist was hurt. . .' (8). Finally, the increasing emotional intensity leads to the realization of 'separation': 'who graciously came here yesterday, took possession of my five senses and my beauty, and then went away, so that my fine golden dresses became loose. . .' (9) The pattern of increasingly intense emotionalism is the same here as in song II, 8.

[5] *Ivarkk' eṉ vaḷaiyum nillā neñcamum tammaṭē cintittērku . . . maruṅkul neruṅka nōkki . . . nañcam uṭaitt' ivar nōkkum nōkkam nāṉ ivar tammaiy aṟiya māṭṭēṉ añcuvaṉ . . . ivar ār kol eṉṉa.*

Similarly, in another poem of the Āḻvār, the *Tiruneṭuntāṇṭakam*,[6] the first ten stanzas are direct statements of the Āḻvār; the second ten (11-20) stanzas are put in the mouth of a mother who describes to us the various emotional states, ecstatic symptoms, and sufferings of her daughter; and in the last section (21-29), the girl herself speaks to us about her love.

It seems legitimate to summarize our results in the following manner. While for Nammāḻvār the 'girl genre' was a distinct form of expression, which only on a high level of abstraction could be evaluated by us as functionally relating to his other poems (the relation of statement: conveyance of emotions), for Kaliyaṉ this functional significance of the girl genre becomes a stylistic device to be used indiscriminately in any poem. Whenever the increasing intensity of his emotions cannot be expressed any more by simply stating it, he turns to the girl conceit. This makes it difficult to determine the degree of autonomy preserved by this symbolic structure; frequently it seems as if 'the girl' has become a direct poetic symbol for the Āḻvār himself in the state of ecstasy. This would also imply a tendency to cultivate specifically erotic sentiments on the mystical plane, parallel to the eroticism in which mythology appears to culminate.

Before turning now to the girl and *gopī* songs in the PTM, we shall look at song **VII, 4** which gives us the details of what Parakālaṉ means by ecstatic bhakti. These details can be gathered together, first, by looking at the various descriptions given in the song of true *bhaktas*: 'they worship His feet' (1f), 'scatter flowers and holy water as offerings and praise His feet' (3), 'praise His name (and deeds)' (4), 'think of Him constantly' (5), 'permanently place His feet in their hearts'. (9) Here again we notice the dynamic increase in emotional intensity, which appears typical of the Āḻvār. But by his time, bhakti has become more complex and includes *sat-saṅga* 'devotion to the true (*bhaktas*)'; thus, secondly, the Āḻvār illustrates his type of bhakti in his own relationship with other

[6] A *tāṇṭakam* is a religious poem, each line of which consists either of six *cīr* (the *kuṟu*—'short' version) or of eight *cīr* (the *netu*—or 'long' version)—see MTL *sub verbo*, and Aṇṇa's commentary, p.2 (both derive the information from the *Paṉ-ṉirupāṭṭiyal*). It must not be confused with the Sanskrit metre *daṇḍaka* of 108 syllables per line (see Veṅkaṭanātha's *Garuḍadaṇḍakam* as an example). Varadachary (1970, p. 123), as usual, goes his own way in his exegesis: 'A daṇḍaka is a small staff used by mountaineers as a help in the ascent. The Divine Lord is a veritable staff. . .'

bhaktas. He 'carries them on the head' (1), 'they are always in my mind' (2), he 'won't part from them' (4), his 'heart is always sweet from sucking their honey[ed words]' (5), 'seeing them, my heart and eyes find their fulfilment' (6), his 'love belongs to them' (7), and finally, on account of them 'my heart melts away' (9). We have the same emotional drive here, from worship to thinking to melting of the heart. Now everything that is said here with reference to the *bhaktas* could equally have been said concerning Kṛṣṇa. In 7: 'I have been thinking of His holy feet, He who has taken possession of my five senses.' Bhakti then has become the complete fulfilment of the senses (in 8: 'worshipping that is the fulfilment of the hands'), and of the emotive sphere fed by them, but it also has now a further 'symbol' (according to my definition): the true *bhaktas*. Interestingly enough, the song concludes with the Āḻvār's realization of his sinfulness:

> What does this melting of my heart mean, of me who am in an ocean of misery because I am full of deceit and have an inside of untruth? (9)[7]

What Nammāḻvār expressed in his dialectic, figures here with Parakālaṉ as the final realization when ecstasy has reached its highest intensity (compare II, 8 and VII, 5, where it is 'separation' instead of 'sin').

(2) *Poems about the girl* As can be expected from the previous observations, the following songs will be of a somewhat different character from those in Nammāḻvār. The borderline with either the mystical or the mythical songs is less clearly defined.

The following table XXI may illustrate the distribution of speakers in the girl poems, the persons addressed, and the emphasis placed here on the temples.

[7] *Kaḷḷattēṉ poyy akattēṉ ātalāl . . . kavalai*^{y} *eṉṉum veḷḷattēṟk' eṉ kolō itu . . . eṉṉ uḷḷam urukum āṟē.*

TABLE XXI

	with temple-reference	without temple-reference
the girl speaks to herself:	VIII, 3; 5 IX, 3; 4; 5	XI, 1; 2; 3
to a friend:	IX, 2	
to nature	III, 6; VIII, 4.	X, 10
the mother speaks to herself:	III, 7; IV, 8; VIII, 1; 2; IX, 9	
to Kṛṣṇa:	II, 7	X, 9

Only five songs (= 25 per cent) are not connected with a temple (TVM: thirteen = 57 per cent). The rich variety of stylistic devices and motifs typical of the autonomous *akattiṇai* has been curtailed, these songs tend to be monologues (TVM 1: PTM 8 girl to herself; TVM 6: PTM 1 girl to her friend (PTM) or mother; TVM 6: PTM 3 addressed to nature), and the girl's friend does not figure at all as speaker (TVM: 3), just as the two 'social relationships' are absent (TVM: 3 girl to mother, 3 mother to other women). Clearly the Āḻvār is not interested in playing with the full potential of an autonomous symbolic landscape, and I think we can regard this as confirmation of our initial assumption, viz. that the 'girl' figures with him as a symbol of himself in the state of ecstasy. On the other hand, these remarks should not give the impression that by now the *akattiṇai* tradition had lost its impact on religious awareness; as we shall see, a fair amount of original (and new, compared with Nammāḻvār) features derived from the *caṅkam* repertoire can be detected in Parakālaṉ's songs.

(i) *The girl of herself* We may conveniently begin with song **XI,3,** which closely links with the remarks made above (*ad* VII, 4.5 and II, 8). Apart from a few subdued remarks,[8] there is little

[8] In 1 we hear: 'Along with my white bracelets, I have lost my beauty' (compare 7), and in 2 'My breasts, without vexing me, are beautiful and radiant'.

evidence for classifying the song as a 'girl poem', and many stanzas could be read as the Āḻvār's own words. In 8 and 9 the heart is addressed, which as we remember is a feature typical of the *Antâtis*; significantly, the song is in fact in the *antâti* form. In 7 we find Tirumaṅkai's definition of *māyā*: 'Why have my bracelets slipped off my wrists, although Kaṇṇaṉ lives in my mind? These are called His tricks (*māyaṅkaḷ*)'.

IX, 3 employs the girl frame in a more distinctive manner. The emotional situation is that of *peruntiṇai*; the girl has decided to go after Kṛṣṇa, who as in Nammāḻvār's parallel song TVM VII, 3 is the god of a temple. Stanza 2 may illustrate the song:

My heart! What is the use of staying here, pondering
and melting away?
Get up, let us go and worship Pullāṇi,
where jewels are carried ashore by the battling
waves of the ocean.
It is the abode of Him
who one day in former times,
in the shadow of a screw-pine with flowers sucked by bees
made my heart overflow with love and desire,
—and then abandoned me.

We have here a good example of the Āḻvār's poetic virtuosity; 'one day in former times' invariably in the *Prabandham* marks a *mythical* event, but here it is a biographical episode which is thus treated quasi-mythically. The remaining stanzas of the song vary only slightly; time and again the girl describes how Kṛṣṇa enticed and seduced her, 'when only the bees sucking honey were witnesses' (4), and then left her. But she concludes: 'Loving Him, let us worship—come!—Pullāṇi, regardless of whether he gives us anything or not!' (9)

There is a group of songs characterized by an abundance of typical *akattiṇai* themes and motifs. These are **VIII, 5**[9]; **IX, 4** and **5**; **XI, 1** and **2**. Moreover, **II, 7** (3 and 4) and PTMaṭ 23-29, 39-47 employ the same motifs and may therefore be included in our discussion here.[10] The situation generally is that of the girl waiting

[9] This might be a mythical song, since (in 10) it says 'women who *formerly* wept. . .' But note above, *ad* IX, 3, 2, about 'formerly'.

[10] Also TVM IX, 9 (a *mythical* poem!) and II, 1 use this symbol-repertoire, and are thus included here.

during the night for Kṛṣṇa.[11] 'I do not know any suffering more painful than to be lonely in the middle of the night...' (VIII, 5, 8). In XI, 1, the girl wonders why nature can cause such agony in her. The idea of punishment enters her mind, for having looked at His beauty (2 and 7); then it might be that nature embodies His own violent character, so well-known also from the myths (1, 4 and 6). Or again, the ocean may be suffering as well, since Kṛṣṇa took his son, the moon, away from him (5). XI, 2 elaborates on the correspondence between Kṛṣṇa's mythical and amorous violence.

Table XXII may illustrate the various *akattiṇai* themes found in the songs:

TABLE XXII

	PTM VIII, 5	IX, 4	5	XI, 1	2	II, 7	PTMaṭ	TVM IX, 9	II, 1
1) moon	1.3.7	6.8.	1.2.5	3.4		3	27.40	4	6
2) *anril*	9	1	1	6	1.5	4	26.43		2
birds in nest	8						1		1
3) *tenṟal*	1. (4)		1.5	1	3	4	42	1.2	
4) bull's bell	7.9	7	4.5		3		25.46	2.10	
5) ocean		9	1.8	5	4.5	3.4	39	10	3
(spray of ocean)	4	7							
6) *vāṭai*			2.3	2.8	4		29	2.4.7.8	4
7) cowherd's flute		3.7	5.8		2		24	1.2.5.8. 10	
8) sun has set	2.5.6.	6			8	4		1	
village asleep	2				6				1
long sleepless night	2.5.6.8		2.3.4		3.6	4			2.7

I shall now furnish some details of these various themes, and discuss their roots in *caṅkam* poetry individually.

[11] Compare TVM V, 4 with this basic situation.

(1) After the day's heat, the moon is usually felt to be cooling; but here: 'the pale rays, filled with nectar, of the guardian of night, are burning' (VIII, 5.1), 'the new moon has become fire' (IX, 4.8).
(2) The soft cooing of birds, male and female lying close together, is painful for the girl since it symbolizes what she is longing for.

> At midnight, when (the male bird) spreads out its fine wings over the female who is greatly afflicted by the increasingly sharp cold, and moves closer to her . . . (VIII, 5,8)[12]

Then there is the *anril* (*krauñca*), cooing in the nest of lotus-fibres (XI, 1,6) on the prickly branches of the palmyra outside the house. The bird 'saws into me with its wailing' (XI, 2, 5). In *Kuru*. 160, 1–4 we hear:

> The *anril* of fire-red head, along with the female with a beak bent like the *irā* fish, is cooing in the nest in the tall branches. . .

In *Nar*. 303:

> Whenever she hears the harsh cooing of the *anril* uniting with its female, birds who have their nest in the curved prickly branches of the palmyra. . ., she falls in agony.[13]

(3) The gentle breeze from the South (*tenral*) is usually found soothing,[14] but for the girl separated from her lover 'it spits fire' (XI, 1, 1) on her 'beautiful breasts' (VIII, 5, 1).[15]
(4) Another sound in the night is agonizing:

> The tinkling of the bell around the neck of the bull who is copulating with a white she-buffalo . . . perturbs my heart. (IX, 5, 4).

We may compare *Kuru*. 279, 1–3:

[12] Compare *Nar*. 152: 'The night causes me pain; it is pervaded by the far-reaching cries of the *anril* bird moving close to its female in the nest, because the northern wind casts particles of ice everywhere.' See TVM V, 2.

[13] See Cāmināṭaiyar, 1962, p. 316 (*ad Kuru*. 160) for further parallels; compare Varadarajan, 1969, pp. 364ff.

[14] In Tamil poetry, the *kōṭai* (west wind) is hot, associated with *pālai* and summer. See Varadarajan, 1969, pp. 235-40; comp. *Akan*. 219 or 353, where the wind is styled 'fiery'.

[15] The pain inflicted by this wind is mentioned, e.g., *Kuru*. 28, 4; Varadarajan (1969, p. 235) refers to *Akan*. 21 and 102 for the general characterization of the *tenral*. The theme, as found in the PTM, etc., may have been influenced by Sanskrit love poetry: see Ingalls, 1965, pp. 320-5.

In the lonely night, the clear bell of broad mouth attached to the tall neck of the black buffalo with curved horns and the colour of darkness, makes music whenever he stirs.[16]

(5) But nature increases her agony not only in contrast to the girl's situation, it acts also as a sympathetic string. The 'sleepless' (X, 4, 9) ocean is incessantly 'weeping and sobbing' (XI, 1, 5). In the *Kuṟu*. 163 we read: 'O ocean! Your roaring is heard even at midnight. . . Because of whom are you suffering?' (1 and 5).[17]
(6) The *vāṭai* (north wind) even by itself is not liked because of the cold it brings.[18] But for the girl 'it is like a blazing fire' (IX, 5, 3). In other stanzas, it is the cold itself that aggravates her pain.[19]
(7) Another sound in the night which causes her agony is the cowherd's flute. 'Because of the flute of the cowherd, I do not know what will happen to me hereafter.' (VIII, 5, 7) Twice the flute is qualified by *āmpal* (IX, 5, 8 and TVM, 9, 2), a *karu* of the *mullaittiṇai*.[20] The theme is not frequent in classical poetry,[21] but by virtue of Kṛṣṇa's playing the flute, it provided great scope for the Āḻvārs, allowing for subtle allusions from poetry to myth and *vice versa*.[22]
(8) The overall atmosphere is created by the theme of the dark night. The sun, and with it the cheerful and distracting day time, have vanished, and darkness has spread everywhere (VIII, 5, 2). The night drags on without end, while the girl cannot find any sleep. On the other hand, everybody else is fast asleep, and does not worry about her (VIII, 5, 2).[23]

We must ask now which of the *tiṇais* constitutes the basic emotional situation described in the songs. Frequently we hear of

[16] Compare TVM IX, 9, 10. Other examples in the *Kuṟu*. are 86, 4-6 and 190, 5-7.

[17] See Cāmināṭaiyar. 1962, p. 321 (*ad Kuṟu*. 163) for parallels; compare Varadarajan, 1969, pp. 375f. Compare also TVM II, 1,2.

[18] This sentiment is nicely expressed in *Naṟ*. 152 (quoted in note 12 above).

[19] For the *caṅkam* examples see already 3.43; parallels in Cāmināṭaiyar, 1962, p. 215 (*ad Kuṟu*. 103); Varadarajan, 1969, pp. 378-80. In *Aiṅ*. 497 it is called 'without mercy' (*aruḷ il*), or in *Kuṟu*. 103 'aggravating pain' (*tuyar kūr*).

[20] Compare *Āycciyar*. 8] a 1-3 and *Kali*. 108.

[21] But see *Kuṟu*. 151, 3, *Akan*. 305, and *Kuṟaḷ* 1228.

[22] See TVM IX, 9 which is a *gopī* poem; also PTM XI, 2, 2 has a vaguely mythical setting.

[23] A very frequent theme in the classical poetry. See, for example, *Kuṟu*. 28, translated Ramanujan, 1967, p. 31. Parallels in Cāmināṭaiyar, 1962, p. 19 (*ad* 6); Varadarajan, 1969, pp. 364-70.

flowers typical of the *mullaittiṇai*;[24] PTM XI, 1, 2 mentions the black clouds of the *rainy season*. Of the themes mentioned above, the buffalo (No. 4), the cowherd's flute (No. 7), the evening (No. 8), and also the *vāṭai* (No. 6), all point directly at the *mullaittiṇai*. On the other hand, the ocean (No. 5) and midnight (No. 8) are commonly associated with the *neytal* landscape. But even in classical poetry the distinction between *mullai* and *neytal*, between 'patient waiting' and 'the agony of being separated', is not fully made.[25] With the Āḻvārs, it is not surprising to see this development from a rather passive attitude ('patient waiting') to emotional agony, which extends then even into the *peruntiṇai*. We may summarize the situation in the following way: Nammāḻvār and Tirumaṅkai-Aḻvār derive their basic inspiration for a *poetic* treatment of bhakti from the classical *mullaittiṇai*, but the drive towards emotional intensity and ecstasy makes them explore the emotional possibilities of the *neytalttiṇai* as well, occasinally to transcend both these *tiṇais* and move into the *peruntiṇai*.

For all we know, TVM V, 5 and IX, 9 may have been the models for Parakālan, but at the same time the latter may be safely assumed also to have had recourse to *caṅkam* poetry independently of Nammāḻvār. This is borne out also by the following song.

(ii) *The girl to her friend* Parallel to TVir 23, where the boy wonders about the girl's nature, in song **IX, 2** the girl muses, after meeting the boy for the first time. whether he was human or divine. Structurally, the relationship is thus (she : he)→Kṛṣṇa, and follows the old *akattiṇai* style. But the Āḻvār's descriptive technique is such that to anybody but the girl it is clear that this lover was Kṛṣṇa himself, the lord of the local temple. 'Friend! How beautiful the stranger was! He resembled the Bridegroom of Meyyam[26] that is surrounded by hills with large bamboo groves.' (3)[27]

[24] See TVM IX, 9 above. PTM IX, 5, 2 and 6 mention *mallikai* and *mullai*.

[25] See above 3.00, note 106. Even an 'academic' poem like the *Mul.* treats the *uri* more in accordance with *neytal*. A similar fusion may be illustrated for four poems in the *Kuṟu*. (viz. 160. 163. 240. 261) where no consistent division is found. We find: *vāṭai*-*mullai* (240), midnight-(probably) *mullai* (261), *vāṭai*-midnight *aṉṟil* (160), midnight-ocean-*neytal* (*but*: also goats, which allude to *mullai*).

[26] *Meyya maṇāḷar*. This is an early example of a phraseology typical in later Śrīvaiṣṇava parlance; through constant usage, each Kṛṣṇa of a temple became known by a special name. An obvious example is Raṅganātha, 'lord of Śrīraṅgam', and less obvious Perumāḷ, the Kṛṣṇa of the Varadarāja temple in Kāñcī.

[27] TVM VII, 7 shows certain similarities with this song.

(iii) *The girl to nature* This genre, which Nammāḷvār exploited so extensively, is of little interest to Kalikaṉṟi. For him nature is more objective, stimulating emotions (as we have seen above), but it does not really function as a symbol, as it does in Caṭakōpaṉ's mysticism. **VIII, 4** is an unassuming song: the girl requests a *tumpi* (bee or dragon fly) to fly to Kaṇṇapuram and bring her the fragrance of the *tulsī*. In **III, 6** only the first four stanzas are addressed to animals (the bee 1, 2, 4; the little stork in 3); in other stanzas, Kṛṣṇa is addressed (5.7-9).[28] Quite likely, the bee and the stork are used here in sexual symbolism.[29] The bee 'opens the flowers and enjoys their nectar' (1), which certainly in Prakrit poetry has sexual significance.[30] **X, 10,** 1-6 is more original; the girl addresses here some animals which occur in South Indian superstition. When the redbird (1) flies to the left this indicates the fulfilment of a wish; the crow's (2) chatter announces the visit of a guest, etc.[31]

(iv) *The mother to herself*[32] Song **III, 7** is a good example to illustrate that the poetic plane is not simply a somewhat altered version of the real landscape filled with the temples, but that it follows its own autonomous rules, Kṛṣṇa and the girl acting in it like real lovers. This is more typical of Nammāḷvār, while the extent of autonomy preserved here is rare in Parakālaṉ. The mother speaks about the elopement of her daughter;[33] she recollects:

He came like a black bull and spoke to my daughter: 'Come! Come!'
He took her hand with the white bracelets, and they abandoned [me], the mother who gave birth to her. Have they now entered Ali? (1)
[My daughter] desired that Cowherd,[34] who had done naughty things before:
he had sneaked in and kissed her beautiful lips (. . .) She has run away after him. (2)

[28] TVM II, 1, 10 is similarly addressed to Kṛṣṇa.

[29] TVM VI, 8, 3f employ the same symbolism.

[30] On the *bee* see, for example, *Sattasaī* 139, 331, 387 (Nos. according to Weber II); on the *stork* ibid. 4 (with commentaries). In *caṅkam* poetry the stork occurs as a sexual symbol, e.g., in *Kuṟu*. 25, translated and discussed by Zvelebil, 1973, p. 116.

[31] The lizard as 'fortune-teller' is frequent in *caṅkam* poetry; see TVir 48, and Kailasapathy, 1968, pp. 62-5. Another omen is the game of *kūṭal*, mentioned TVir 34 and NTM IV.

[32] This structure is not always strictly maintained. In VIII, 5, stanza 3 is spoken by the mother; only in III, 7, 2f or V, 5, 4, the mother addresses other women.

[33] See TVM VI, 6, a parallel poem.

[34] Note the ambivalence here between the mythical and poetic cowherd Kṛṣṇa.

But the idea of her now being with Kṛṣṇa is worrying:

When I hear about his character—how violent he is and how in fierce anger he cut off the nose of the Rākṣasī[35]—I get really scared. (3)

Then she turns to her own lot:

My daughter had no compassion on us humble people whom she calls her father and mother. She desired the pleasures of the large shoulders of Him the husband of Piṉṉai (7)

Looking around the now empty house, the mother says:

She has left behind her winnowing fan, the green parrot, the play-ball, the swing, and the *pūvai* bird that talks sweetly. (8)[36]

In **V, 5** we are given a very detailed description of the girl's emotional state. Here it is particularly obvious that the girl's behaviour implies bhakti—the appropriate thing in the 'temple-landscape'. She ignores her whole environment: 'she won't sit any more on my lap' (1), 'she does not mix with her friends' (4), 'she does not feed her green parrot with milk' (9). She is absent-minded and perturbed: 'whatever one may say to her, she will always reply "Tiruvaraṅkam of our Perumāṉ!" ' (6) 'she chokes when speaking' (1), 'her eyes are filled with tears' (3), 'she swoons' (6). That this is bhakti becomes particularly clear in 2: '"Sell me as a slave-girl to Him!" ' or in 8: 'Without ever forgetting all the time she says "Māyavaṉ! Mātavaṉ!" '

The remaining four songs can be dealt with briefly. **IV, 8**: she notices strange changes in her daughter, and quotes a long list of exclamations—bhakti as singing His names. **VIII, 1:** She asks: 'What does is mean when (my daughter) exclaims "the golden discus" ?' and gives herself the answer: 'She must have seen Ammān of Kaṇṇapuram.' (1) **VIII, 2:** 'She worships Kaṇṇapuram, her thoughts with Him of the black ocean's colour,' and symptoms like sleeplessness are mentioned. **IX, 9:** she wonders whether her daughter 'did actually unite with the leader of the gods . . . abiding in Tirumāliruñcōlai.'

(v) *The mother to Kṛṣṇa* **II, 7,** as also the more concise **V, 5,** contains a very extensive description of the girl's emotional state.[37]

[35] This is Śūrpaṇakhā, mentioned in the Rāma story.

[36] Compare TVM VI, 2 and 7, 3 for similar lists of the girl's playthings.

[37] Stanzas 3f were discussed above, since they contain a number of typical *caṅkam* themes.

The mother asks Kṛṣṇa what he thinks about her daughter (in a free refrain). We hear of the girl's fever, which even sandal-paste and sandal-powder and pearls cannot reduce (3), of her rubbing her two breasts in despair (4). 'Her passion *(aṉpu)* has become greater than her respect (*ātaram*)' (9).

Such ecstatic and erotic behaviour is typical of Kalikanri's poetry, probably even more so than of Nammālvār's.[38] Particularly II,7 is very vague about its setting (poetic or mythical); similarly **X, 9** may be classified as 'girl-poem' only tentatively.[39] In this song (X, 9) the mother scolds Kṛṣṇa for his irresponsible behaviour towards the girl. In vivid similes she contrasts his present attitude with the heroism (and heroic violence) he has displayed in in the past.[40] He treats the girl's love like 'a metal-bowl' with which a naughty child might play (1), and 'taking away her braclets' is like 'gathering honey from the *muruṅkai* tree' (2). He uses her like a piece of jaggery (3) and considers her as common as a *nāval* fruit lying on the road (5). She is just like a sip of water for him (8), and he looks upon her as upon a waste garden (9). All this is in contrast to his past exploits: 'Is this your heroism [which you displayed by] defeating the seven bulls, when you gleefully danced and jumped about at the crossroads?' (2)

We can turn now to those songs in the PTM which more or less clearly show a mythical frame.

(3) *Mythical songs* Songs X, 2 to 8 repeat the pattern we noticed for III, 8: a culmination of Māyōn's manifestations in the erotic episodes of Vṛndāvana. X, 2 and 3 are sung by the Rākṣasas of Laṅkā, praising Rāma and begging his mercy. X, 4 to 6 deal with innocent events in Kṛṣṇa's childhood in Vraja. In X, 7, Yaśodā and other women begin to complain about his mischievous behaviour with the young *gopīs*, and finally in X, 8 a *gopī* scolds Kṛṣṇa for his unfaithfulness. Song X, 9 is highly emotional, but we are presumably dealing here with a girl poem (see above), of which

[38] It would have been tedious to repeat here all the symptoms of ecstasy which we have already frequently encountered in Nammāḻvār.

[39] In II, 7 the mother addresses Kṛṣṇa as 'Our Father of Iṭaventai', and in X, 9, 2 she refers to 'the forecourt of your temple'; in both cases, these are no definite marks of the girl genre. PâḻTM III[1], 7 and 8, which are direct parallels to PTM X, 9, are decidedly mythical.

[40] PTM XI, 1f illustrate a similarly pregnant treatment of Viṣṇu myths; compare TVM IV. 2.

genre X, 10 to XI, 3 are more obvious examples. Thus it appears that for the Āḻvār the erotic culmination of myths is in turn transcended by an even more intense personal emotionalism.

X, 7.[41] Yaśodā and the other women are in despair over Kṛṣṇa's mischief with the girls.

Yaśodā: O women! Because your cowherd caste knows
of self-respect and honour,
I shall request him not to do [such] blameworthy
things to the girls.
But I am unable to scold him.[42] I shan't speak
angrily to him.
His father can't be strict with him either.
So he is now churning [you say] the curds in
the eastern house[43] along with a girl, is he?[44]
What can *I* do about it! (1)[45]

After a series of other complaints (stealing butter 2f. bullying Balarāma 4), matters have become more serious.

A woman: Lady (Yaśodā)! The father had not come home, and I
wasn't there either.
Nor were her friends around.
My daughter with her hair full of fragrant flowers was alone.
He went to where she was playing,
took away her play-ball,
seized her by the silken dress and tore it.
What can we do now about Nanda's son, so full of
deceit and wicked acts?
Yaśodā: What can I do, what can I do about it! (5) (refrain)
Another woman: Nanda's son came during the night to our hamlet,
and whistled with a pipe made of a leaf.

[41] Compare TVM VI, 2 for some of Kṛṣṇa's practical jokes. PāḻTM II, 8 is a close parallel.

[42] In NTM III, 9, the *gopīs* say precisely this to Kṛṣṇa, half scoldingly and half to encourage him.

[43] Idiomatic; houses in the neighbourhood are specified as eastern, western . . . in relation to one's own house.

[44] See below PāḻTM VI, 2, where the 'churning' is far from literal; even here it might be less innocent than it appears.

[45] *Māṉam uṭaitt' uṅkaḷ āyar kulam ātaṉār piṟar makkaḷ tammai/ūṉam uṭaiyaṉa ceyya pperāy enr' irappaṉ urappa killēṉ/nāṉum uraitt' ilēṉ nantaṉ paṇitt' ilaṉ naṅkaikāḷ! nāṉ eṉ ceykēṉ/tāṉum ōr kaṉṉiyuṅ kīlaiy akattu ttayir kaṭaikiṉrāṉ pōlum.*

After that, in what state was my daughter!
Her eyes languid, panting, her breasts heaving up and down,
and her red lips all pale! (6)

Yaśodā confesses that she is actually scared of Kṛṣṇa,[46] but in 11 she makes an attempt to scold him.

Yaśodā: How can you do such wicked things to the innocent *gopīs*?
—So you were sitting [they say] high up in the tree,
weren't you?
You had sneaked there unseen and snatched away their clothes,
—when the girls with serpent-thin waists
were diving into the pool with lilies, bathing.
They begged you, but you said:
'O good girls! Come and get the fine garments yourselves.' (11)[47]

X, 8. Stanza 10 of this 'scolding poem'[48] mentions the situation: '. . . the words of censure spoken at night by a *gopī* "over there" to Kṛṣṇa during a love-quarrel.' The girl is enraged about his unfaithfulness and tries to be cold to him. 'What is this? For what purpose are you standing outside, forgetting the time and the hour, and all dressed up?' (1) 'We realized the secrets of your mind last night, when you did not come at the [appointed] time.' (7) 'Now we have nothing whatsoever to do with you.' (8) In stanza 9, we have a brief reference to the *kuravai:* 'you who love the *kuravai* with the girls, embracing them while dancing and swinging.' But this is no more than a 'mythological reference.'[49] Song X, 7 illustrates an increasing tendency (when we look at subsequent Āḻvārs) to explore the childhood adventures of Kṛṣṇa poetically. Particularly important is the introduction of *the mother* into the mythical plot level, an adaptation of the 'girl genres'. This feature could now trigger off a whole new complex: a poetic focus is created for 'the mother's' emotions, which via Yaśodā allowed for 'real mothers'' sentiments to be expressed. **X, 5** may illustrate this.[50] Each stanza is addressed to Kṛṣṇa and relates some of his wonderful childhood deeds; Yaśodā figures in the

[46] Compare PâḻTM III, 1, where this is treated more elaborately.
[47] This is the *vastraharaṇa* episode; NTM III deals with this incident fully.
[48] Compare PāḷTM VI; TVM VI, 6; NTM II.
[49] Defined above pp. 273f; see in particular note 111.
[50] There are many examples for this type of folk-song in Periyâḻvār, where further details will be given.

third person as part of the narrative. Now the refrain says: 'Clap your hands, you of sapphire's colour, clap your hands!' (*Cappāṇi . . . cappāṇi*!) and this *cappāṇi* is in fact a game mothers play with their children when they are five or six years old.[51] Most likely the Āḻvār adopted rhymes used with the *cappāṇi* and current as folk ditties, by writing specific Kṛṣṇaite stanzas for it. Mothers could sing it to their children, just as Yaśodā might have sung it to Kṛṣṇa.[52] **X, 4** is very similar, only that Yaśodā herself speaks here. From the refrain 'Come, take my breast in your mouth and suck from it' we know that this is derived from a folk-song sung by mothers breast-feeding their babies.[53]

This poetic approach is novel; Nammālvār does not yet employ it. But what I have said above about the *Āycciyar* and the *Kali.* may be recalled; I postulated that these works show traces or echoes of folk songs, a 'folk culture' influenced by popular Kṛṣṇaism. I think we can link Parakālaṉ's two songs X, 4 and 5 with this folk-culture. Before we can summarize our results, we must discuss two further poems by the Āḻvār, one very long 'girl', and one long '*gopī*' poem.

4.332 *The Tirumaṭals*

These unique works, unlike any other poem in the *Prabandham*, offer us something like a systematic theory of bhakti; it is total emotional involvement and transcends all other ends of life. Not that we are dealing here with philosophical poems in the ordinary sense of the word; the overall frame is that of the girl or *gopī*, and all her thoughts and arguments refer principally to the (autonomous) poetic plane. Moreover, the Āḻvār here more than anywhere else displays his baroque linguistic and poetic virtuosity. Nevertheless it is possible to abstract from this a theory of bhakti. The actual content of the poems may be summarized as follows. The *Vedas*, revealing the mysteries of Māyōṉ, enjoin also the four ends of life; among these, the girl claims, *kāma* is the highest and justifies even unorthodox behaviour. She describes her great agony caused by the beauty of Māyōṉ, whom she has seen in Naṟaiyūr or dancing with the vessels, and complains about his cruel indif-

[51] PâḻTM I, 6 is another *cappāṇi* song; see there for references.
[52] Structurally this is not obvious from X, 5, but see X, 4 below and Periyâḻvār.
[53] Compare PâlTM III, 1 which is a 'breastfeeding song' too, but with a twist.

ference to her. She decides to ride on the *maṭal* (thus the title of the poems)[54] to proclaim his wickedness all over the country. I shall now discuss some of the crucial passages in detail.[55]

(1) *Arguments in favour of Kāma* (PTMaṭ 5 to 19)

The imperishable *Vedas* proclaim the fourfold good path exalted in the world: *aṟam* (- *dharma*), *poruḷ* (- *artha*), *iṉpam* (- *kāma*), and *vīṭu* (- *mokṣa*). (5)

Kāma in this context refers clearly to sexual love, but this is precisely what 'love of Kṛṣṇa' means in the *poetic* landscape of the girl and the temple. On the other hand, we have seen that *iṉpam* is closely linked with bhakti in Southern texts;[56] this ambivalence provides the rationale for the whole poem. 'The last among these four (viz. *mokṣa*) is said to give us "a name hereafter"[57] (6)'

But we know only from hearsay that person X at such and such a time obtained exactly this [*mokṣa*], by eating rotten fruit and dry leaves, by torturing his body, (. . .) by exposing himself to the heat of the sun (. . .) We shall not correct such people with stupid small minds who say these things without being able to prove them. (7-9)[58]

In other words, *mokṣa* is totally unverifiable and, for all one knows, all that self-mortification may be useless. The girl turns now to *dharma*, the reward for which is supposed to be *heaven*. Charac-

[54] *Periya*—'great' because it is a longer version compared with the *ciṟiya*—which follows very much the same lines. Parallel to *tāṇṭakam* (see 4.331 note 6), the title might alternatively be derived from *maṭal* in the meaning 'poem in the *Kali-veṇpā* metre' (MTL). But the MTL refers back to *ulāmaṭal*, poem about a man threatening to ride on the *maṭal*, while for *ulā* (lit. 'procession) it speaks of a poem about a woman who has been infatuated by the beauty of the hero coming in a procession. Parakālan's poem certainly is in the *Kaliveṇpā* metre, and there are vague similarities in the theme, but one still may wonder whether the forms of poems mentioned by the MTL were not *developed from* these *Maṭals*. Compare Zvelebil, 1974, p. 216.

[55] The numbering used here is that of the 'thought-units' (see 4.21 with note 8).

[56] See, for example, 4.313 with notes 117-19.

[57] A Tamil idiom which could be paraphrased as 'transcendental state of being'. Compare TVM V, 4, 5: 'The name that remains after me will not let me die [really]'. The roots of the idiom lie in the classical idea of the hero becoming immortal through his name, viz. his fame sung by the poets. See Kailasapathy, 1968, pp. 234-7; 254-6.

[58] *. . . coll allāl iṉṉatōr kālatt' iṉaiyār itu peṟṟār eṉṉavuṅ kēṭṭ' aṟivat' illai/ . . . collātē aṉṉatē pēcum aṟiv' il ciṟu maṉattu āṅku aṉṉavarai kkaṟpippōm yāmē.* Compare CTMaṭ 3f.

teristically it is 'the golden town of [Indra] the king of the gods, who has a thousand eyes' (10)—the manifest signs of his lecherous nature.[59] All that heaven is about are 'women with waists lightning-thin who indicate their desires by bright smiles' (12).[60] In many lines of highly erotic flavour she describes the amorous pleasures offered by these heavenly *houris*, which are 'indeed the reward of *dharma*' (18). Thus all one achieves through *dharma* is *kāma*. *Artha* is dealt with briskly: 'also splendid wealth concerns [viz. has as its purpose] only such things [viz. *kāma*].' (19)[61] *Mokṣa* falling outside empirical truth, and both *dharma* and *artha* aiming ultimately at *kāma*, the girl can draw only one logical conclusion: 'Therefore we shall pursue the firmly established path of *kāmam* alone!' (19)[62]

A truly revolutionary line of argument, it would seem. But it is not without parallels elsewhere. *Kāmasūtra* I,2 may be considered as the point of departure for the girl's argument. It discusses the position of *kāma* within the *trivarga*, and aims at justifying *kāma* in terms of orthodox belief. A fragile balance is struck between the three ends, and Vātsyāyana cannot but state the superiority of *dharma* over the other two. Vātsyāyana summarizes (in *sūtras* 25–9) a materialistic (Lokāyata) objection against *dharma*:

> One should not perform acts of *dharma*, because their reward lies in the future and is in fact doubtful. Which fool would give to someone else what he has in his own hand; for a pigeon today is better than a peacock tomorrow.[63]

This is refuted by the KāS. Then he mentions various objections against *kāma* (objections behind which we can sense the prejudice of the normative ideology against physical pleasures) in *sūtras* 40-5. Vātsyayana replies that 'physical pleasures are of a nature similar to food, since they contribute to the well-being of the body;

[59] When Indra had seduced Ahalyā, the wife of the sage Gautama, the sage cursed him to have a thousand vulvas on his body, but then appeased, he changed them into a thousand eyes.

[60] Already in the earlier Tamil tradition, heaven is populated by beautiful girls, the rewards for the heroes. See *Pura*. 287, 10-2: 'he will enjoy the bliss of marriage with a spotless maiden in the heaven' (quoted by Kailasapathy, p. 254).

[61] *Oṇ poruḷum anna tirattatē.*

[62] *Ātaḷāl kāmattiṉ maṉṉum vaḷi muṟaiyē niṟṟu nām.* Compare CTMaṭ 2.

[63] *Na dharmāms caret (25) eṣyat-phalatvāt (26) sāṃśayikatvāc ca (27) ko hy abāliśo hasta-gataṃ para-gataṃ kuryāt (28) varam adya kapotah 'svo mayūrāt(29).*

they are the reward of *dharma* and *artha*.'[64] The girl's arguments accept this reply, but retain the materialists' objection to *dharma* as valid.

We do not know whether Parakālaṉ actually drew his inspiration from this passage. But we can assume that the passage had a considerable influence on various plays in Sanskrit which are of a frankly erotic character and contain arguments in favour of sex, though for humoristic purposes. One of the oldest examples of this genre of play belongs to the Āḻvār's own environment,[65] the *Mattavilāsa*. In this farce (*prahasana*) a drunken *kāpālī* mendicant says to his girl-friend:

> That infinite, eternal bliss which sages have meditated upon—it can be seen here in its fulness; but the remarkable thing is that it can be enjoyed by the senses and has sexual pleasure as its essence. (stanza 9)

Mokṣa is said here to be nothing else but sex. But note here the definition *karaṇa-bhogyam* 'can be enjoyed by the senses'; with Kalikaṉṟi this could be an attribute of bhakti.[66]

There is another early play, Īśvaradatta's *Dhūrtaviṭasaṃvāda* (a *bhāṇa*), in which similar arguments are put forward on a larger scale. After verse 58, the Rogue (*dhūrta*) questions the Playboy (*viṭa*) about *kāma* (in this context, love of a prostitute). He assumes a position also found in KāS I, 2, 41: 'love is a waste of money'. The Playboy replies by distinguishing three purposes of money: hoarding (rejected), charity and pleasure (both accepted). (59) Then he defines the culmination of all pleasures as 'to bear on one's body the loins of a whore' (60), so that one purpose of money is fulfilled here. Charity, like gratitude, is an act of *dharma*, and in view of the ultimate pleasures a prostitute provides, to be charitable and grateful to her is therefore the highest act of *dharma*. But the Rogue is not content; now he resorts to the authority of the *smṛtis*, the normative moral code, and puts forward an objection similar to KāS I, 2, 42-5: 'One must not be attached to any woman' (after

[64] *Śarīra-sthiti-hetutvād āhāra-sadharmāṇo hi kāmāḥ* (46) *phala-bhūtāś ca dharmârthayoḥ* (47). In *sūtra* 3 he had already stated that *kāma* ought to be practised in one's youth, and in *sūtra* 51 he says that one must not aim at one of the ends by ignoring the other two. Compare Schmidt, 1902, pp. 81-92 on the whole discussion.

[65] The author of the farce is the Pallava king Mahendravarmā I (580-630) about whose descendant Nandivarmā I (731-796) Parakālan writes in PTM II. 9.

[66] PTM XI, 7 shows that bhakti is the fulfilment of all the senses. Compare VII. 4.

64).[67] The Playboy counters: 'This is nothing but advice; I have not seen anyone who does not associate with women.' And what better proof for this than Indra's seduction of Ahalyā, which is also adduced in KāS I, 2, 45? Then he tells the Rogue quite explicitly why sex with a whore is absolute bliss:

> I shall consider him who gives up prostitutes and aims at heavenly sensuous enjoyments as one who has been cheated. (. . .) What is the joy in it when the very fact of taking another birth is in doubt, and when that enjoyment [in heaven] is difficult to obtain even through austerities! (. . .) Where is the need of heaven for man (. . .) when his chest is pressed by the stout breasts of his beloved! (. . . 66). These pitiable people, imitating each other's conduct like red ants, do not examine things for themselves and just repeat after each other: 'There is heaven, there is heaven.' (. . .) Drawn to this mirage, non-existent heaven, they reach for it by horrible mutterings of the Lord's names, offerings, vows, falling from mountains, entering the fire and other such activities that endanger one's life. The world does not desire the real truth.

Thus the Playboy adopts the materialist's position as his own, adding ideas which we have found expressed by the girl. Other examples from popular comedies could be quoted here,[68] but I think it should be clear by now that we are dealing with a set of elements which—for comic or serious purposes—reappear time and again in Indian works. The plays can afford to go to such extremes of anti-orthodoxy only because their humour does not really question it; once these arguments are seriously used (as in the *Kāmasūtra)*, the tone is much more restrained. Even the Āḻvār avoids an open clash with orthodoxy by adopting the girl frame, but in spite of this the rationalism, strictly empirical position, and 'humanism' of the girl's arguments remain powerful. By

[67] Since it is a comedy, the real authority behind this *parapakṣa* can be revealed: the orthodox *smṛtis*. To avoid 'attachment' is precisely what the normative ideology is preoccupied with.

[68] E.g., *Dhūrtasamāgama*, Act I, 25: 'I don't care about *dharma*, which consists of many bothersome actions; I certainly don't find happiness. But *wealth* is capable of supplying all the treasures of the art of *love*' (spoken by an old bawd). Or *Hāsyārṇava*, Act II,13f, where it is said that people recommending *dharma* ought to have their mouths shut up with ashes. The tension between *dharma* (*smṛti* and normative ideology) and Tamil sentiments (which defend *kāma* in the girl frame) appears to occur in a more general context. See the *Tiṇaimālainūṟṟaimpatu* and Zvelebil, 1975, p. 119, note 51: 'Obviously the entire sociological and aesthetic concept of . . . "natural, spontaneous union of sexes" was regarded—and very justly so—as something specifically Tamil.'

unpacking the girl code *kāma* becomes *bhakti* (which the Playboy certainly did not like), but given the anthropocentric orientation of bhakti expressed by the Āḻvārs, much of the opposition to, and criticism of, orthodox religious attitudes remains intact.

(2) *Arguments in favour of the maṭal.*

We know from listening to Southern literature that there is a rule which forbids girls (. . .) to climb on the *maṭal* to insult the gossiping villagers for the sake of [obtaining their] lovers. We fail to understand this, and prefer the Northern attitude. Girls who do *not* want it, (. . .) [are the same who] would not melt to the sweet melodies of the cowherd's flute. (20. . .24)[69]

Girls who are really in love—so that they are sensitive to the various painful stimuli of nature—are prepared to defy society. She refers to a number of such examples found in Northern literature; they are examples of a woman making an active effort to secure her lover: Sītā followed Rāma into exile, Vegavatī got her husband out of a battle[70], the *nāga* princess Ulūpī married Arjuna,[71] Uṣā won Aniruddha, Umā gained Siva's love and Vāsavadattā assisted in the escape of Udayana[72]. Then she speaks about her own love: how she went to Naṟaiyūr, looked to her 'eyes' satisfaction' (39), and became infatuated with Māyōṉ's beauty. The *gopī* (in CTMaṭ) watches Māl dance with the vessels, and falls madly in love with

[69] *Naṭaiyār alar ēca āṭavar mēl maṭal ūrār enpat' ōr vācakamum tenṉ uraiyiṟ keṭṭ aṟivat' uṇṭu ataṉaiy ān teḷiyōm; . . . vaṭa neṟiyē vēṇṭiṇōm.* For this, and the other themes mentioned here see above Table XXII.

[70] A story presumably found in the *Bṛhatkathā*. In *Kathāsaritsāgara* XIV, 106f (in Tawney's translation vol. 7, pp. 24-7; 37-42) we hear of a Vegavatī who had to fight with her own brother for the sake of her lover. Compare note 72 below.

[71] See MBh I, 214 etc., Sørensen, pp. 688b-689a.

[72] Tamil: Vācavatattai. As Aṇṇa. (pp. 50f, *ad locum*) rightly points out, she cannot be the heroine of Subandhu's poem Vāsavadattā, since its plot shows no similarity with the episode that is alluded to here. The Āḻvār must be referring to Vāsavadattā, later wife of king Udayana, who figures prominently in the *Bṛhatkathā* tradition (see, e.g., *Kathāsaritsāgara* I, 12f, Tawney's translation, vol. 1 (1923) pp. 133-8. 149-51). Zvelebil (1974, p. 135) dates the Tamil *Peruṅkatai* by a Koṅku-vēḷir AD ± 750, and thus the Āḻvār could have known the story from this work (see *Peruṅkatai*, *Uñcaikkāṇṭam*, chs. 32ff). Udayana is held captive by Vāsavadattā's father, king of Ujjain, but she, in love with him, schemes against her own father and escapes with him. Also Vegavatī (see note 70) ought to figure in the *Peruṅkatai* (see Zvelebil, 1974,p. 135), but the extant text is incomplete, breaking off just before the Vegavatī episode should begin.

him.[73] But he does not care, while she is now in great agony. After praising him profusely—his *avatāras* and his many manifestations in the Southern temples (48-67, also CTMaṭ 39)—she threatens:

'I let him know the state of my heart; if he still does not grant me his grace and his chest, I shall publicly announce all his unworthy deeds!' (68f)

Among these she mentions his stealing the butter and then being fettered to a mortar, his cutting off the nose and ears of Sūrpaṇakhā, etc. The *maṭal* is the way in which these blameworthy or humiliating deeds can be publicized:

'So that the world comes to know [of these deeds], I shall ride on the *maṭal* [made] of palmyra branches!' (77f)

Taking to an act which society refuses her, she intends to create a public scandal that is designed to challenge Kṛṣṇa. When the *gopī* (of CTMaṭ) had watched Māl's dance with the vessels, out of love for him she fell ill. As in TVM IV, 6, her mother resorted to the conventional cure:

Looking at me who experience madness in my body
which I cannot discard,
she laments, . . . , places fine dust on me as
protective charm,
and makes promises—which she will not keep—
to Cāttaṉ[74] with the fragrant garland
of red *kuṟiñci* flowers. (8-10)
But even on account of all this
the disease of my mind does not subside;
my fits of madness do not stop,
and my black colour does not return. (11)

[73] CTMaṭ 6f. On this mysterious dance see above 3.524, note 206 (compare TVM IV, 2, 5 where the dance is referred to in close connection with the bullfight).

[74] According to Aṇṇa., this is Skt. Śāstā (for which Aṇṇa. suggests the very unlikely 'Buddha'). Śāstā is the Skt. name of the popular Tamil god Aiyanār, who—riding on the terracotta horses constructed near the fields—protects the villages during the night. Legend makes him the son of Śiva and Viṣṇu who had taken on the form of a woman, Mohinī. (Compare for a South Indian account: Mahārāja Serfojī's *Mohinī-Mahêśa-pariṇaya-nāṭaka* (in Marathi), ed. T. R. Bhima Rao, Tanjore Sarasvati Mahal Library, 1972 (p. 51: *Śrī Candraśekhara . . . utpann āji sa-dayā tava-putra Śāstā . . .* (verse 62); *Mohinī putra-ratna gheūn yete. . .*). However, *kuṟiñci* flowers might suggest Murukaṉ.

Women friends advise the mother to call a *kaṭṭuvicci*,[75] a female soothsayer, to ascertain the cause of the disease. The poem gives us an amazing description of the woman's performance.

> She enters into a trance (*kaṭṭu*),
> pulls out a few rice grains
> from the fine winnowing basket,
> scatters them, begins to sweat,
> trembles and shakes with agitation,
> the hair on her body stands on end,
> she smells her hand and exclaims:
> 'He who has a thousand names!'
> After that,
> she gesticulates, suggesting a black body,
> and cries out:
> 'O lovely conch in his hand!'
> By gestures she indicates a fragrant garland
> of strings of *tulsī* flowers;
> then, having indicated with signs
> [that it is Viṣṇu],
> she says:
> 'You need not be afraid at all;
> he who has caused the illness in your girl
> is not just anybody:
> I know him well...'

Giving a detailed account of some of Māyōṉ's mythical exploits (stealing the butter, etc.), she identifies him with the cause of the girl's illness (16-26). The mother stops worrying, thinking 'is she not a devotee of his?' (27) But the *gopī*'s agony does not subside; she sends her heart as messenger to Māyōṉ, but it does not return. She decides to follow the example of Vāsavadattā, visit all the sacred shrines, and ride on the *maṭal*. (40) Except for the hint that 'a certain person called Māl . . . held up two splendid vessels' (in 7), the poem reads like a 'girl poem', and makes no further reference to the mythical frame.

Already in the TVM and the PTM we have encountered some allusions to the *peruntiṇai*,[76] to which also the *maṭal* belongs. In a way, the present poems can be regarded as an elaborate extension of TVM V, 3, 9f, and at the same time its justification. In TVM,

[75] She appears also in TVM IV, 6.

[76] See TVM VII, 3; PTM IX, 3; the *maṭal* is mentioned TVM V, 3, 9f.

the girl's decision is simply stated, but Parakālaṉ sees the problem involved in terms of Tamil poetics. The 'rule' which the girl has referred to is *Tolk.* III, 1, 35 (= 981): 'In whatever situation (*tiṇai*) the girl may be, she has no right to [ride on] the *maṭal.*'[77] Moreover, even the lover could only actually ride it in *peruntiṇai* (*Tolk.* III, 1, 51, = 997); otherwise only the threat to do so was allowed (*Tolk.* III, 3, 11, = 1048 and III, 3. 20, = 1057, line 21).

What precisely was the significance of this mysterious 'riding on the *maṭal*'? The word '*maṭal*' denotes primarily the prickly branches of the palmyra;[78] this is employed also in the compound *maṭaṉmā*[79] 'horse-like figure made of palmyra branches'. But idiomatic usage shortens it and speaks simply of 'maṭal' when referring to the contraption.[80] Threatening to 'ride on the *maṭal*' is quite a common theme in the *caṅkam corpus*[81] while the *Kalit-tokai* has some songs also about its actual execution.[82] From such references I shall attempt now to reconstruct the custom and its significance.

Most important, to ride on the *maṭal* is an act of despair at a hopeless love-affair;[83] it may be the girl herself, or her parents, who refuse to yield to the boy's entreaties. This despair expresses itself in the defiance of all social rules about honour, shame, and embarrassment:[84] it means to make an utter fool of oneself, to be laughed at and gossiped about by the villagers.[85] To sit on the horse-like contraption with its prickly branches is a painful affair.[86] A bell is hung round the 'horse's' neck,[87] and it is adorned with *āvirai* flowers.[88] The boy has white bones hanging around his neck,[89] and wears *erukku* flowers.[90] He is singing about his des-

[77] *Ettiṇai maruṅkinum makaṭūu, maṭaṉ mēr porpuṭai nerimai inmaiyāṉ.*

[78] E.g., in *Pura.* 29; 370, 16; 371, 15.

[79] In *Tolk.* 1048.

[80] E.g., in *Tolk.* 981 or 997.

[81] For the following sketch, I have utilized *Kuru.* 14, 17, 32, 173, 182; *Nar* 146, 152, 342, 377; *Kali.* 138; also TKō, Chapter X (stanzas 73-81).

[82] Songs 138 to 141.

[83] *Kali.* 138; *Kuru.* 182; TKō 73, 75;

[84] *Kuru.* 14; 173; 182.

[85] *Kuru.* 14; 17; 32; 182. TKō 74. *Nar.* 152 'madness'; *Nar.* 146.

[86] *Kali.* 138; TKō 80.

[87] *Kuru.* 173; 182.

[88] *Kuru.* 173.

[89] *Kuru.* 182.

[90] *Kuru.* 17; a whole list of flowers *Kali.* 138, 28-32.

perate love, his suffering, and about the girl.[91] If he is lucky, people may feel pity for him, and scold the girl or her parents, and he may obtain his beloved.[92] More likely, the very thought of the scandal caused by his riding the *maṭal* would have induced the girl or her parents to yield.

A good illustration is *Kuṟu*. 173:

People in this village will scold her publicly; they will say that all this—the pain that causes such agony—was brought about by such and such a girl. Knowing this, I am decided: I shall abandon all shame and shall ride on the huge horse made of palmyra branches, that wears a garland of thickly strung *āvirai* flowers, so that the bell tied to its neck will tinkle.

In *Kali*. 138 we see what then will happen:

A lonely person is singing these songs about her on the streets of the village. All of you, listen to them! 'My soul is made to melt away like a doll made of salt when exposed to the rain. My life is fading away like a wick inside the [lamp's] oil and set on fire.' When she heard me singing thus, she came to grant me her favours. Thereby she made the *maṭal*, the refuge in great despair, to be a place of great bliss—just as people who have performed *tapas* give up their bodies and easily reach the exalted world.

This is then roughly the general significance of the custom[93] which the girl alludes to. On the poetic plane, the *maṭal* is clearly a powerful symbol to illustrate the desperate longing of the girl in love with Kṛṣṇa. To find fulfilment for this physical love means, still remaining on the poetic level, fulfilling one's human existence (see her arguments in favour of *kāma*). As long as there is 'love in separation', the *maṭal* is the final refuge towards which the intensity

[91] *Naṟ*. 377; in *Kali*. 138 (translated below) we find an actual song. In TKō we find further features (75f, 78f): the lover makes a picture of the girl and himself, and carries the piece of cloth while sitting on the *maṭal*. In 75 we have a significant comparison: 'I shall come riding on the *maṭal* [desperate] like somebody who has not obtained the grace of Him who wears the tiger skin (=Siva).'

[92] *Kuṟu*. 173 and *Kali*. 138 (both translated below).

[93] Riding on the *maṭal*, along with the other Tamil custom we encountered above, viz. the bullfight, are nectar and ambrosia for a structuralist. A whole series of binary oppositions can be established, e.g., bull: horse; real: artificial; accepted and therefore heroic: ludicrous and thus scandalous; bull-inflicted pain: self-inflicted pain; winning a girl offered: a girl that refuses or is refused; public admiration: public blame, gossip, or pity; common in both cases are the desire to win a girl and 'to ride in public' (the sexual overtones of which are documented for the bullfight, see *Kali*. 103, 71-3, = 3.533, note 226.)

of her emotions drives her, yet there is only hope, not certainty, that the final refuge will contain the final fulfilment.

Unlike Nammāḻvār, Parakālaṉ makes it difficult for us to unpack this symbolism, because he is not really interested in savouring all the many nuances of the poetic symbols and in spreading them out before us in all their dialectical richness. Judging from the two *maṭal* poems, it would appear that his dynamic nature was not content with relishing the emotional ambivalence of all human religious experience as the modality of Kṛṣṇa's very presence (as I have postulated for Nammāḻvār), but desired actively to interfere with this ambivalence, to turn it into an experience of complete human fulfilment. More than Nammāḻvār's 'girl', Kalikaṉṟi's 'girl' (or *gopī*) is aware of herself as a physical being[94] and has to argue in defence of *kāma*, physical fulfilment. To love Kṛṣṇa means to find sensuous fulfilment,[95] for the girl, the *gopī* and the Āḻvār. But this involves necessarily an even more intense awareness of 'separation'[96] which has to result finally in frustration, in spite of all emotional effort. To 'go through villages and towns' and to 'sing about Māyoṉ's exploits' are for Nammāḻvār still forms of bhakti which allow him to relish Māyoṉ 'symbolically'. In the words of the girl, to go through towns and villages, 'proclaiming publicly His deeds' (77f) betrays this frustration, and has turned into a desperate means to overcome the 'separation' in terms of Nammāḻvār's awareness, to overcome the limitations of symbolic presence.

4.333 *Systematic evaluation*

It has not been possible, or even necessary, to deal with Parakālaṉ's songs nearly as extensively as with Nammāḻvār's. Barring a comprehensive monograph, it may be said that Caṭakōpaṉ created a blueprint which the following Āḻvārs built upon without altering its basic structure. But I have tried to show in the previous pages that Kalikaṉṟi by no means simply imitates Caṭakōpaṉ, and a fair amount of difference in nuance has been noted. In the formal structure of the girl genre a considerable simplification has taken

[94] Compare above p. 385.

[95] Fully developed for bhakti in PTM XI, 7.

[96] In Nammāḻvār we have seen that very frequently Māyoṉ's presence is indicated (e.g., in the act of composing poetry, in the 'parrot' or in 'darkness'); we have songs TVM IV, 4 and V, 6, which category is altogether absent from the PTM.

place. The 'friend' has altogether receded, 'nature' has been pushed into an inferior position and no longer intervenes between Kṛṣṇa and the girl (as in the TVM), 'society' is now nothing that demands attention, which is particularly borne out by the fact that there is a pronounced tendency towards monologues by the girl or her mother. In other words, the horizontal variety and richness of the poetic level found in Nammāḻvār has shrunk considerably; the Āḻvār has concentrated quite literally on the emotions of the girl (which in Nammāḻvār figure more as the centre of gravity of the rich autonomous structure). It is here now that Parakālaṉ contributes new facets. He draws heavily on *akattiṇai* themes (independently of Nammāḻvār) which all show nature stimulating or intensifying the girl's agony. The descriptions of the girl's ecstatic symptoms have become more intense. Moreover it appears that the Āḻvār builds into his songs an emotional dynamism, leading the reader progressively from more neutral material (and states) to a peak of ecstatic experience. This also means that because of the horizontal shrinking of the autonomous poetic structure, the girl's emotions can be directly integrated into the vertical dynamism of the Āḻvār's emotional drive. The girl illustrates how quite directly the *bhakta*'s ecstasy, and in her passionate desires those of the *bhakta*, are expressed in a concrete manner.

This formal analysis has brought us to the centre of the Āḻvār's religious awareness. More than in Nammāḻvār, the girl represents here the *bhakta* aware of himself as a sensuous physical being searching for the fulfilment of the senses. Bhakti is thus quite naturally seen as the fulfilment of the physical being (see XI, 7). We could speak here of an intensified anthropocentrism, in which, in addition, man's *active* drives are integrated (as evidenced by the structural dynamism of the poems, or the poetic symbol of the *maṭal*). But these changes are not without their repercussions. In Nammāḻvār a fragile balance was struck between the drive towards Kṛṣṇa, and relishing his presence in the symbols; to explore the rich possibilities of the *akattiṇai* was one way of achieving this relish, and however strong in the relish of the symbols the undercurrents of separation may have been, Nammāḻvār is doubtlessly also a mystic of *union* (see TVM IV, 4 and V, 6, as the most extreme manifestation, and compare the 'mystical situation' described above, Table XVIII). Parakālaṉ's more intensive awareness of himself as an active physical being cannot accept this

balance; the symbolic structure of poetry has become impoverished, songs about union are altogether missing, and 'separation' has become much more literally a desperate state of agony. Nammāḻvār experienced all symbols as open, Kalikaṉṟi strives to break through this openness towards the sensuous fulfilment suggested by the symbols. But this is precisely the point at which the *condition humaine* has to turn the dynamic drive into frustration, because in human terms such an ambition is clearly impossible. I think that, particularly in the PTMaṭ, such a note of frustration can be detected.

Can we discover another form of balance in Tirumaṅkai-Āḻvār? It appears to me that the great emphasis placed on the other *bhaktas* (in PTM VII, 4), who have almost taken Kṛṣṇa's place as objects of the Āḻvār's bhakti, suggests such an emotional adjustment or compromise. This may for instance explain the disappearance on the poetic level of the theme 'struggle with society', because for the Āḻvār society meant these few real *bhaktas*, towards whom he could relate as *personal* symbols of Māyōṉ. Closely linked is another phenomenon that could be taken as means to ease the emotional tension: the temple cult and pilgrimage (note the *tīrthayātrā* structure underlying the arrangement of the PTM, and the stress on the temple as part of the poetic landscape[97]). Very tentatively also the shift towards mythology may be interpreted in this sense; compared with Nammāḻvār's three *gopī* songs, which are through and through 'separation-poems', PTM X, 2 to 8 and CTMaṭ are different. It looks to me as if here the Āḻvār does not find a mythical archetype of 'separation', but a source of relish (a relish which Nammāḻvār found in the nature of the symbols in general). Note in particular the greatly increased stress on the eroticism in the *gopī*-songs; Kṛṣṇa's naughty behaviour with the *gopīs* is presented in such a manner (can we say humorous?) that we feel amusement and relish, but not the pain and agony found in Nammāḻvār. However, when I speak here of balancing factors, this does not mean that the overall dynamism and frustration are cancelled out by these (note for instance that the *gopī* poems lead over to the

[97] Compare the proportions: TVM (23 girl songs): 10 with and 13 without reference to a temple; PTM (20 girl songs): 15 with and 5 without temple reference. In the PTMaṭ, Nos. 38f give a very elaborate description of a temple figure, and Nos. 53 to 68, CTMaṭ 39, list about 40, and 26 respectively, different temples in the South.

highly emotional and agonized girl songs, in X,8 to X,9, and that the CTMaṭ—in itself only vaguely mythical—has a much more detailed parallel in the PTMaṭ.)

We need not repeat here what has been said above about the new poetic genre which we find in the PTM (the folk-songs, in which the childhood of Kṛṣṇa is seen through the eyes and with the emotions of a mother). In general this is connected with the shift towards a more pronounced mythical awareness, which at the same time reduces the importance of the *poetic* landscape. But the present material shows little more than the very first step in this direction, and we had better postpone this discussion until, with Āṇṭāḷ, Periyâḻvār, and Kulaśekhara, these tendencies have fully matured. On the other hand, the causes underlying this shift towards a pronounced mythical associative structure can already be detected here in some other phenomena. We have clearly noticed in a number of places Northern material making its presence felt. Southern bhakti has become a problem when it is related to the concept of *tri-* or *caturvarga*, a typical element of Northern ideology, and significantly the Āḻvār focused on *kāma*. It is more difficult to ascertain the precise source for his argument among the various texts that contain a similar defence of *kāma* (*Kāmasūtra*, *Mattavilāsa*, *Dhūrtaviṭasaṃvāda*) and can be dated prior to the Āḻvār; but whatever the influence, the conceptual material and the line of argument are clearly Northern. Thus for the first time in the sources discussed here Southern bhakti has entered into a direct discussion with Northern ideas. To provide a definition in terms of *kāma* was certainly characteristic of the pronouncedly anthropocentric, sensuous and emotional nature of Āḻvār religion, but in the long run—particularly when the girl frame ceased functioning—bhakti as *kāma* would not be tolerated by Sanskritic ideology, and was altogether abandoned (both as religious experience and as intellectual construct) by Śrīvaiṣṇavism.

Again, we see the girl (in the PTMaṭ) or a *gopī* (in the CTMaṭ) resorting to Northern material when justifying *her* riding on the *maṭal* (the references are to the *Rāmāyaṇa*,[98] and *Bṛhatkathā* or at least one of its later versions, the *Mahābhārata*, a *purāṇa*, and

[98] Note that in PTM X, 2 and 3 for the first time in our sources themes from the *Rāmāyaṇa* are dealt with on the plot level of a song.

possibly the *Kumārasambhava*). What is interesting here is that, in contrast to what we find in the earlier Āḻvārs, 'secular' or non-Vaiṣṇava figures are used as models of behaviour for the girl.

On the other hand, we still have not come across any definite evidence of the influence of any of the material discussed in 2.00, particularly of the 'final *viraha*' of the *gopīs* once Kṛṣṇa had departed for Mathurā (as developed in the Br/ViP).

4.34 **Periyâḻvār and his** Tirumoḻi

The *Antâtis* and the *Tiruvāymoḻi* aim at being the *summae* of Vaiṣṇavism; the *Periyatirumoḻi* fits that character only vaguely. After Kalikanṟi, the situation changes and the poems cover a much more limited and selective area. In a way it would be natural for us to continue our discussion with those poems in which the girl genre is maintained, since in the previous pages this has been the focus of our attention. But in order not to disturb the chronological order—however fragile it may be in itself—of our discussion, we must look briefly at Periyâḻvār before discussing Āṇṭāḷ. The great majority of this Āḻvār's songs links with another poetic genre which we have encountered in the PTM in an inchoate state, viz. mythical poems, and in particular mythical 'folk-songs', and we thus find the remarkable fact that the first *brahmin* Āḻvār[1] is at the same time the one closest to folk art and sentiment. There is another connecting line to the PTM: bhakti has become fully emancipated from the poetic and mythical planes.

The arrangement of Viṭṭucittaṉ's *Tirumoḻi* is very similar to the structure of the PTM. I,1[2] serves as a general introduction, and its content is dealt with again in V, 1 to 4, the final four songs. Within this frame we have I, 2 to III, 8, the main bulk of the work, which treats the childhood and youth of Kṛṣṇa in Vṛndāvana up to—possibly—his departue for Mathurā; I have styled this section the *Bālacarita*. The systematic biographical arrangement has its parallel in the *tirthayātrā* of the PTM. As in PTM (X,I), an antiphonic song III, 9 concludes the systematic arrangement. III, 10

[1] As stated in 4.21, we do not know the caste of the Early Āḻvārs; tradition believes them not to have been brahmins.

[2] This song is frequently separated from the *Tirumoḻi*, and treated as a second work by the Āḻvār, called the *Tiruppallāṇṭu*.

to IV, 10 discuss a variety of religious topics, like the practice of giving children Vaiṣṇava names (IV,6).

As in the previous chapters, I shall begin with a summary of the Āḻvār's general bhakti attitude (based on the frame songs I, 1 and V, 1 to 4). After a cursory survey of the *Bālacarita*, I shall analyse in greater detail those songs in it which deal with Kṛṣṇa's affairs with the milkmaids (II, 7 . . . III, 8).

4.341 *Viṭṭucittaṉ's bhakti in general*

Like Toṇṭaraṭippoṭi, Viṭṭucittaṉ, the only other Āḻvār who definitely was a brahmin (besides Āṇṭāḷ), makes a number of references to an institutionalized brahmin temple service. He calls himself 'a Vaiṣṇava living in your temple'[3] and tells us that he 'recites the *Ṛg-, Yajus* and *Sāma-vedas* and collects flowers [for the ritual] that have opened the same day'.[4] It has been the profession of his ancestors:[5] 'my father, his father . . . for seven generations in succession we have performed the [temple-] service.'[6]

We are such servants: wearing the yellow garment which you have worn and then discarded, eating from your plate, and adorning ourselves with the *tulsī* flowers (. . .) which you have worn and discarded.[7]

Thus his bhakti has as its *locale* the hereditary and professional performance of the temple ritual, and when the Āḻvār speaks about Viṣṇu's dwelling in his heart, the temple-symbolism employed is more specific than in earlier Āḻvārs[8]:

[3] V, 1, 3: *uṉ kōyilil vāḻum vaiṭṭaṇavaṉ*.

[4] V, 1, 6: *irukk' ecu ccāma Vēta-nān-malar koṇṭu* . . . Note that in the same context is mentioned also the *tirumantra* which will play such an important rôle in later Śrīvaiṣṇavism: *namo Nāraṇāyeṉṟu*.

[5] Compare v, 4,3: *eṉ kula teyvamē!* 'O deity of my lineage', (Compare *Stotra-ratnam* 6).

[6] I,1,6: *entai tantai ... ēḻ paṭi kāl toṭaṅki vantu vaḻi vaḻi āṭ ceykiṉṟōm*. 'Seven' in Tamil means 'all'. Compare stanza 7: *kōyiṟ poṟiyālēyott' uṇṭu niṉṟu kuṭi kuṭi yāṭ ceykiṉṟōm*. 'Through family tradition we have been serving you, marked with the temple-seal.'

[7] I, 1, 9: *uṭuttu kkaḷainta nin pītaka vāṭaiyuṭuttu, kkalattat' uṇṭu, . . tuḻāy malar cūṭi kkaḷaintana cūṭum it-toṇṭarkaḷōm*. After the ritual, the priest takes the utensils for his own usage.

[8] See 4.313. 1b for the parallelism temple: heart in the *Early Antâtis*.

The Veda-pirāṉ has come, entered, and taken possession of my body; he is reclining there;[9] he is the protection of this 'temple-town' [the heart or body].[10]

Addressing Garuḍa he says, 'O king of birds! Do not sleep, but watch and protect the "bedroom" [the heart, where Viṣṇu is reclining].'[11]

There are a few allusions which may be taken as indications of a re-emergence of the *yoga*-ideology, submersed since the Early Āḻvārs. A negative value is attached to the senses: 'O evil-doing senses, go away!'[12] We hear of the 'lotus of the heart' and 'knowledge': 'Pirāṉ came and entered into the lotus of my wicked heart, the house of knowledge.'[13] 'The nectar-river called "knowledge" flows ever deeper and wider.'[14] In whatever way precisely the Āḻvār may have linked Kṛṣṇa's dwelling in the heart with *bhakti-yoga*, this mysticism has stimulated a number of vivid similes.

You diseases that have got hold of me, live upon me, and spread all over me like ants that have discovered a pot full of ghee and crawl on to it! Run away quickly to save your lives! Veda-pirāṉ has come and entered my body... (V,2,1)

Reversing the imagery he says:

I have taken hold of you [Kṛṣṇa] on all sides; from now on I shall not let you escape. But if you hid yourself through your illusiveness, it might be an exercise of your sovereignty, but you would not be faithful to anyone.[15]

When you churned the ocean of milk and obtained the nectar, you poured it into a vessel; just so I have opened the mouth of my melting body, swallowed you up and filled myself with you. (V,4.4)

[9] The *mūlavigraha* in Śrīvilliputtūr is that of Viṣṇu *Vaṭapatraśāyī* 'Reclining on the *banyan* leaf.'

[10] V, 2, 1.

[11] V, 2, 9; *paḷḷi^{y} arai* 'bed-chamber', room in the temple where the deity sleeps.

[12] V, 2, 5: *vali val kurumparkaḷ uḷḷīr naṭamin.*

[13] V,2,8 *pōt' ir kamala vaṉ-neñcam; pōtu il* 'abode of knowledge' according to the commentator Aṇṇa; while the traditional interpretation of *pōtu*<Skt. *bōdhi* is probably correct (Periyavāccāṉ = *aṟivu*), *il*, = 'abode' (Periyavāccāṉ) is doubtful; More natural would be *il* = 'without'.

[14] V,4,2: *aṟivai^{y}ennum amuta^{v}āṟu talaipparṟi vāy kkoṇṭatē.*

[15] V,3,2: *vaḷaittu vaittēṉ iṉi ppōkal oṭṭēṉ; uṉ-raṉ intirañālaṅkaḷāl oḷitt' iṭil niṉ tiru^{v} āṇai kaṇṭāy, nī^{y} oruvarkkum meyyaṉ allai.* Note *intira°* < Skt. *indrajāla* 'mirage', 'magic art', an interesting rendering of *māyā*.

Nothing of your heroic deeds has been lost, because I have written all of them on the wall of my heart. Once you are inside me, where could you then go? (V,4,6)

It is through his grace that Viṣṇu enters into the Āḻvār's heart; even when he boldly speaks of 'swallowing Him up', he knows that by right of His sovereign power and by means of *māyam* He could always 'escape', and that only his 'faithfulness' (= Kṛṣṇa's own bhakti) makes him stay. We have here the general situation within which ecstatic bhakti arises. With resonances of Nammāḻvār, the Āḻvār longs *really to see* Māyōṉ, and that not only because He is in the heart 'along with the many-hooded serpent' (V, 2, 1), but also because the pain of longing is intrinsically linked with the ecstasy of experiencing Him.

In the longing to see the place where he sleeps a pretended sleep on the serpent which has rolled out as his mattress on the white ocean, my soul gets agitated. Lacking any comfort, I sob; my hair stands on end, I shed tears, and cannot find any sleep in my bed.[16]

And the same symptoms manifest themselves when 'I have united with you so that I live':

My legs don't move, my tears don't stop, and my body trembles from exhaustion. My voice gets stuck, my hair stands on end, and my arms hang down in paralysis. My mind runs wild in confusion (*māl*). (V,3,5)

As in Nammāḻvār, 'separation' and 'union' show identical ecstatic symptoms. But compared with earlier Āḻvārs, the 'I' appears quite independent of any frame or conceit, and what used to appear in this elaborate form predominantly as erotic symptoms in girl or *gopī* poems, figures now directly in the Āḻvār's own emotional situation, on the experiential plane.

This emancipation of an 'erotic mysticism' does not discard the symbolic expressions of it; though the 'girl genre' is not documented in the present *Tirumoḻi,* the mythical poems amply illustrate eroticism. In general, we may say that myth for the Āḻvār is the bridge between Kṛṣṇa in the heart and Kṛṣṇa as the object of his longing to see: 'I have written all of your heroic deeds on

16 V, 1, 7: *veḷḷai veḷḷattiṉ mēl oru pāmpai mettaiy āka viritt'ataṉ mēlē kaḷḷa nittirai koḷkiṉra mārkkaṅ kāṇal āṅ kol eṉṉ ācaiyiṉālē uḷḷañ cōrav ukant' etir vimmi urōma kūṟaṅkaḷ āy kaṇṇa nīrkaḷ tuḷḷañ cōra ttuyil aṇai koḷḷēṉ.*

the wall of my heart—once you are inside me, where could you go?'[17]

4.342 *The Bālacarita*

In a series of independent songs, Periyâḻvār envisages the childhood of Kṛṣṇa through various games and ceremonies such as a real South Indian child would play and go through. The real world of childhood is projected into the realm of myth, with the young Kṛṣṇa as its main actor. For instance in II, 3 Yaśodā calls Kṛṣṇa so that the ear-boring ceremony can be performed.

But we could also say that the realm of myth is projected into real life. Song I, 4 is a cradle-song sung by Yaśodā; the various stanzas list the different gifts the gods have brought for the new-born baby. In the refrain we have the word *tālēlō* which—though of obscure etymology—has a well-defined function: to mark the song-genre 'lullaby'. There are two other *tālēlōs* in the *Prabandham*,[18] and even today lullabies with that refrain are common in the South. We can assume that the Āḻvār composed the song for young mothers to sing as a lullaby. There is a whole set of such folk-songs in his *Bālacarita;* Tamil poetics knows of the *piḷḷaittamiḻ*, songs accompanying the games etc. of children, and the Āḻvār is presumably one of their oldest authors.[19] In the PâḻTM we find at least four of the ten stages which later are styled *piḷḷaittamiḻ*: *tālēlō* (I,4), *ceṅkīrai* (I,6: the baby is made to crawl and nod with its head), *cappāṇi* (I,7[20]), *ampuli* (I,5: the mother calls the moon to play with the child).[21]

Just as Parakālaṉ composed songs for most of the Southern temples, so that at many temples the pilgrims had one or more to sing, and just as Viṭṭucittaṉ wants children to have Vaiṣṇava names (IV,6), he infuses bhakti material into the ordinary games

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[17] V, 4, 6: *vikkiramam . . . ellām eṉṉ uṭai neñc' akam pāl cuvar vaḻiy eḻuti kkoṇṭēṉ, . . . eṉṉ iṭai vant' . . . iṉi[y] eṅku ppōkiṉṟatē.*

[18] Both are by Kulaśekhara: VII is sung by Devakī, and VIII is addressed to the young Rāma.

[19] See Zvelebil, 1974, p. 213; 1975, p. 158.

[20] See on this *ad* PTM X, 5; compare the remarks made there on this folk genre.

[21] In I, 8 the mother calls her child to come walking to her, which possibly corresponds to *varāṉai*. Another *piḷḷaittamiḻ* theme is the *cirṟil* 'small houses (of sand)', which we find in TVM VI, 2, 9; PTM III, 8, 8; NTM II; compare *Kali.* 51, 2 and 111, 9. It is mentioned here PâḻTM I, 2, 19 and II, 8, 3. II, 2 (Yaśodā calls Kṛṣṇa

of children, thus making sure that even when singing a lullaby Kṛṣṇa is being thought of and praised.[22] All this reminds us strongly of the folk-songs that seem to have accompanied the real bull-baiting or *kuravai*, songs in which Kṛṣṇaite themes are similarly expressed.

Whence did Periyâḻvār derive the inspiration for his *Bālacarita*? I have found a passage in which he paraphrases the *Harivaṃśa*, so that for the first time (as far as the restricted range of our sources here is concerned) we are dealing with a definite link with one of our Northern sources. In Hv 60, 15b we read: '(He devoured) the lake of curds with whirlpools of ghee and filled from the rivers of milk',[23] which the Āḻvār renders '(He devoured) the mountain of rice, the marsh of ghee, and the lake of curds.'[24] I think that in the two common *rūpakas* we can safely assume direct literary dependence.

4.343 *The gopī poems*

Periyâḻvār's songs about the baby Kṛṣṇa are far from being sugary or sentimental; there is a remarkable freshness and down-to-earth spirit about them.[25] Looking more closely at some songs (between II,7 to III,8) which treat Kṛṣṇa's adventures with the *gopīs*, we similarly find that however charming or amusing their portrayal of Kṛṣṇa's mischief, the links with bhakti as pain and separation are never lost sight of. Yaśodā's anxiety at being unable to control her son or understand him, her constant worry about his safety, and, above all, her being all the time exposed to the criticism and slander of other women—all this is real pain in the Āḻvār's songs.

II,7 This is the first song in which Yaśodā mentions Kṛṣṇa's erotic adventures.

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for breast-feeding) may be compared with PTM X, 4. In II, 1 we have the *pūccik-kāṭṭi* (showing the bogy-man).

[22] Śaivite legend actually states the circumstances in which Māṇikkavācakar composed songs of a similar folk nature. See Pope, 1900, p. 117: '. . . seeing the women . . . enjoying their favourite game of Ammānai and accompanying it with a simple song, [he] listened to their words, and then put the substance into these verses [the Tiru Ammānai].' Compare *ibid.* pp. 128,159,175 etc.

[23] *dadhi-hrado ghṛtâvartaḥ payaḥ-kulyā-samākulaḥ.*

[24] III, 5, 1: *cōrru pparuppatamum tayir vāviyum neyy aḷarum aṭaṅka.*

[25] Note, for instance, I, 3; the natural down-to-earth attitude shows itself in stanza 6, where in a *pādâkeśa* description of the baby also his *muttam* (< Skt. *mūtra*) 'penis' is mentioned.

O you treasure-house of constant mischief! climbing up to the upper storey and entering into women's bedrooms, tearing their blouses and silken garments, and rending their *saris* with precious borders. (3)

In 7 she indicates the crux of the whole matter: 'My son, you have [grown up now and] learned how to infatuate the girls!' (Yaśodā is calling him home, to put flowers into his hair).

II,8 Yaśodā wants to 'protect her son' from evil influences;[26] in stanza 3 we hear of another piece of mischief:

That time I spoke angry words to you, when you had kicked and destroyed the food and the houses of sand[27] of girls with tender breasts, and you did not come home to eat your food. Now I won't do anything to you: come here...

II,10 The song contains a list of things Kṛṣṇa has done, some naughty and some wonderful.[28] According to stanza 10, girls and women come and relate them to Yaśodā.

He threw mud at us, when we were playing in the river, bathing. He snatched our *saris* and bracelets; he ran away faster than the wind and disappeared in the house. The whole of today he would not answer us, would not say a word about the bracelets—the whole of today. (1)

He snatched the *saris* of the girls; they begged him, worshipped him, praised him who had climbed into a tree. The whole of today he would not return the clothes, though begged—the whole of today. (2)

III,1 Yaśodā tells Kṛṣṇa that she cannot breast-feed him any longer. Not only is she scared by what happened to Pūtanā (1), but he has grown just too old for it. 'You disappeared into the northern house[29] where you changed the appearance of a girl. . .' (2) 'You infatuate (or 'drive them crazy', *maiyal*) the milkmaids, you pursue them, seize their beautiful *saris* and then in a lonely place you do many bad things.' (4) He casts his luring glances

[26] Among other things, this ceremony consists of waving a 'twilight lamp' before the child's face (9); at evening twilight, the crossroads are dangerous (2) and Kapāli (Durgā) roams about (8).

[27] See note 21 above.

[28] In a most idiosyncratic manner, the Āḻvār not only mentions genuine Vṛndāvana episodes (Kāliya 3, Dhenuka, Govardhana 4, Pūtanā 6) but also Mahābali (7), the Gajendra (8) and Varāha (9), as if these had happened in Kṛṣṇa's childhood in Vṛndāvana. Compare PTM X, 7 for a similar song, also TVM VI, 2.

[29] This idiomatic expression means, into the neighbouring house towards the North. Compare PTM X, 7, 1.

like a net over the girls (6), plays the flute for them in secret groves (7). He embraces them and has his fun with them, 'does things that must not even be mentioned in words' (8). He exploits the absence of parents and 'takes the girls just as he likes, and walks off with them.' (9) Yaśodā concludes in resignation:

> You took a girl along with you and entered a large grove. You clutched her breasts, and stayed there the whole night. You came home only towards dawn. Whatever people may tell me about you, I cannot control you at all, alas! I have come to know you now. (10)

III,2[30] It seemed best to Yaśodā to send Kṛṣṇa into the forest with the cows, to prevent him from 'roaming about each and every house' (1). 'He should not become intimate with the cowherdesses, should not kiss their mouths, caress and fondle them' (5). He should not loaf about and do naughty things to the girls, wiping the turmeric off their breasts or destroying their sand houses' (2). But now, once he has gone into the jungle, she is worried about all that might happen to him. His tender feet might get pricked (1); in the jungle are hunter tribes (2) whose arrows might hit him (5), and dangerous elephants (6). When Kṛṣṇa finally returns in the evening, she is relieved (III,3), but his return also has other effects, as we hear from various speakers in the following song.

III,4[31] 'Everywhere the girls lose their hearts, forget to eat their food, and pine away' (1). A mother tries to give advice 'don't lose your bangles when you meet him returning towards evening'(2). A girl tells her friend:

> I don't know that I ever have seen someone like him. Just look at him! I have lost control over my breasts: when I see him coming home and playing the flute, I lose my bracelets, and my *sari* gets loose! (4)

III,6[32] This song takes up Kṛṣṇa's playing the flute and elaborates upon it. By its music, the whole sentient and even the insentient world is thrown into a trance. We hear of girls (1f), celestial women (3f), the Kinnaras and Nārada (5), Gandharvas (6), gods (7), birds and cows (8), deer (9), and even trees (10).

> Due to the music of the flute in the pure mouth of Māl, the young breasts of the cowherd girls throb in delight; their hearts and bodies become excited.

[30] See TVM X, 3 where a *gopī* is worried about Kṛṣṇa when he is in the jungle.
[31] The theme is found already *Āycci.* 8]a; compare TVM IX, 9.
[32] Another description of the flute-playing is TVM IX, 9, particularly 9.

Everywhere they come running, jump over fences, and then stop, let their heads drop in embarrassment. (1)

When Govinda plays the flute, his left chin resting on his left shoulder, and his hands folding around it, his eyebrows arching and turning upwards, and his belly puffed up like a pot [from a deep breath]—the girls stand there with eyes darting, their braided hair, adorned with flowers, loosens, and while holding their slipping garments with one hand, they become languid. (2)

III,7 A mother describes the infatuation of her *gopī* daughter. Although 'she has not even learned to put on her dress properly' (1) she is 'now entirely infatuated by Māyavaṉ' (2). When playing in the sand, she does not, like other girls, make the 'small houses', but 'the conch, discus, club, sword, and bow' (3). 'She has been thrown into the deep pool called "Master of the Discus" and is caught in it' (4). She has become 'a ladle without a handle' (7), and dressing herself up, she looks into the mirror and swoons (8). There are practical difficulties arising for the mother:

What would be gained by having her married, losing [thereby] all the wealth we possess, and by placing her [in the custody of a husband]? (*People say*:) Let her grow up with Him of the raincloud's colour, like a seedling growing in a rice-field [to be transplanted later], so that *He* can decide what ought to be done. (9)

While we were planning to keep her inside the house and to arrange in our affection her marriage at great expense, she thought differently. (*People say*:) Bring her together with Him, before the diagnosis will be: She has passed beyond a state which medicine [can cure]. (10)

III,8 The dilemma grows and leads to the only solution: Kṛṣṇa has eloped with the girl.[33] The mother wonders whether the girl has entered the outskirts of Mathurā.[34] The poem depicts a whole

[33] Compare TVM VI, 7 and PTM III, 7, where we find the mother on the *poetic* plane speaking about the girl's elopement.

[34] Stanza 1. *Maturai ppuṟam*, according to the commentators = Āyppāṭi (Vraja). The poem is difficult to evaluate. One possibility would be to regard the song as the only 'girl poem' of the Ālvār—the elopement takes place on the *poetic* plane (as in TVM VI, 7 and PTM III, 7). But the mythical character of Vraja would speak against such an interpretation. Perhaps a mother from a neighbouring village is speaking. Personally, I am tempted to take *M°puṟam* more literally, and link it with the departure of Kṛṣṇa for Mathurā to kill Kaṃsa. In that case, according to Periyâḻvār's idiosyncratic treatment, Kṛṣṇa took a *gopī* with him to Mathurā. However, see in 4 the reference to Yaśodā as the mother-in-law.

spectrum of motherly worry. In her usual rôle: 'The evil he did will it for ever remain one great stain on our family?' (2) Then she wonders whether Kṛṣṇa's people have made the marriage arrangements (3): Are they just living together like jungle dacoits, or will they get married the proper way? (6) What status will Kṛṣṇa give her, and what work will she be made to do? (7-9) Will Yaśodā—the mother-in-law!—receive the girl well? (4) And, typically enough, 'is Nanda going to say: "the mother who gave birth to this girl will be unable to bear her grief"?' (5)

4.344 *Evaluation and summary*

Compared with the three mythical songs in the TVM and the seven in the PTM, Periyâḻvār's twenty-seven poems (note also the absence of any girl song) are surprising. We may say that a new form of thinking and feeling has emerged in the South, a form no longer dominated by the associations and ideological values of the old *caṅkam* culture, but which envisages reality through the cosmos of myth. We appear to have in the songs themselves a number of clues as to the origin of this development: the *Harivaṃśa* indicates direct links to Northern texts, the Āḻvār is a temple brahmin who recites the *Vedas*, and new emphasis is placed upon *yoga* and the curbing of the senses. Where Caṭakōpaṉ and Kalikaṉṟi thought in poetic terms (TVM VI,7 and PTM III,7), the Āḻvār resorts to myth (III, 8): Northern cultural values have deeply influenced and transformed the Southern awareness.

Yet this is only one aspect of Viṭṭucittaṉ's work. Much of Tamil culture has remained, and in certain respects even developed further with him. Instead of a purāṇic narrative, we find a series of songs which in sprte of an overall systematic arrangement look at individual facets of Kṛṣṇa's childhood; moreover, their approach is emotional. The mythical events are seen through the eyes of the mythical actors, particularly Yaśodā, and their literary treatment stylizes them in such a way (by using genres of folk-songs) that a real mother can identify herself with these emotions, and can sing the songs, for example when playing with her child. Again, many of the themes depicted (like the *cirṟil*, the sand-houses) are typical of older Tamil poetry, just as the connection of particular folk customs with mythical songs (which, we might say, are acted out in the custom), has been detected already in the *Kalittokai* and the *Āycciyarkuravai*. In language and idiom, Periyâḻvār comes

closer to ordinary people than any other Āḻvār.[35] It is a difficult problem to find an overall explanation for the clear Northern influence on the one hand, and the closeness of our brahmin priest to the ordinary people and his deep roots in Tamil culture on the other hand. I shall not attempt an answer here.

There is in fact evidence that the early *Ācāryas* already used Periyâḻvār's songs to express their personal emotions. III, 8, 4 ('I had only one child; I brought her up . . . but Māl took her and went away') is a good example. Hagiography mentions that Rāmānuja recited this stanza at the death of his nephew Kūrattāḻvān.[36]

Looking closer at these songs, we notice a rather important change. While in the TVM and PTM the girl's emotions constituted the focus of attention, in Viṭṭucittaṉ's *Tirumoḻi* the emphasis is on *the mother's* emotions. Only through her eyes can we look at Kṛṣṇa or at the infatuation of a *gopī*. (Note that only in II, 10, in a few stanzas does a *gopī* actually speak.) Once this is recognized, it will not surprise us to find the theme of separation in its previous treatment practically ignored here. Concentrating on the mother's emotions, we see precisely 'separation' appearing as the final sentiment: 'Māl took her and went away' (III, 8, 4). It is as if the Āḻvār wanted the reader to participate in the mother's feelings, which—after the agony of not comprehending and not being able to control Kṛṣṇa (because of his tricks and mischievous nature—his *māyā*!)—culminate in 'separation'. Interestingly enough it is not even separation engendered by Kṛṣṇa's, but by the girl's departure.[37] As a corollary to this new poetic treatment we find that the rather daring erotic and sexual adventures of Kṛṣṇa never appear directly on the plot level of a song (in which case they would be aesthetically

[35] Zvelebil, 1975, p. 158: '. . . he avoids the lofty and learned style and uses Brāhmaṇ colloquialisms of his age, introducing many current Kṛṣṇa stories; proverbs and similar popular matter.'

[36] Aṇṇa. (*ad locum*) mentions an *aitihyam* about this. In the legends about Periyâḻvār himself the stanza is recited by him, when Āṇṭāḷ has gone away to Śrīraṅgam.

[37] This can be considered to be the very first step in a direction which Caitanya has fully exemplified: in a love poem to abstract altogether from any mythical figures, and relish the underlying emotion as *religious rasa*—something that Nammāḻvār had achieved in his *akattiṇai* poems of the structure (he : she) → Kṛṣṇa. The PāḷTM by Kulaśekhara will have further examples of the approach to myth via other figures (Devakī, etc.).

relished *as such*), but are subservient to the main emotion, the mother's worry. Not unlike this, also in the Āl̲vār's own mysticism the erotic symptoms are integrated into his ecstasy.

Granted that there are a number of new developments here we can nevertheless say that Periyâl̲vār still continues the spirit of Nammāl̲vār: as we have seen (V, 4, 6) Kṛṣṇa becomes present in his heart in the heroic deeds that are 'written on its walls', but tasting the sentiments of these deeds (via the mother) this presence is overlaid by the emotion of 'separation', which in turn stimulates the 'longing to see'. This is not dissimilar to Nammāl̲vār's dialectical experience of Kṛṣṇa's presence, and we are probably not wrong in assuming that the Āl̲vār has, as historical fact, derived his attitude from Nammāl̲vār.

We must look at one final question: where does Periyâl̲vār take his mythical themes from? We know that the *Harivaṃśa* most probably was one of his sources. But then we must remember that the particular chapter dealing with the *gopīs* in that work is of a most chaotic character;[38] thus not surprisingly, no reference is made in the Pâl̲TM to a dance (absent also in the Hv); and remarks about Kṛṣṇa's relationship to the *gopīs* are scattered unsystematically over many songs. Again, whenever a theme is treated more fully, we can refer back to very close models in the TVM or the PTM. Now I think that this situation gives us two important indications:

(a) I would strongly doubt that the Āl̲vār was familiar with the versions found in the Br/ViP. Like the Hv, he has not realized the potential for *viraha* which lies in the *gopīs'* separation caused by Kṛṣṇa's departure for Mathurā (exploited for the first time in the Br/ViP). He is obviously aiming at this emotion to culminate the sentiments contained in the Vṛndāvana myths; but to achieve this he had to resort to the rather indirect means of treating a mother's grief over the loss of her daughter.

(b) For all these reasons it seems fairly evident that he cannot have known the BhP version either, for it is basically an elaboration upon the Vi/BrP one. Moreover, the new material in the BhP version, which bears such striking resemblance to some of

[38] See my characterization of it (p. 73 above): '. . . a strange and puzzling passage . . . no recognizable story, no logical development, no coherence in the narrative'. It is therefore no surprise that the Hv version has left little impact on the Āl̲vār's treatment of the *gopī*-episodes.

the Āḻvār's songs, thus cannot be said to have been the Āḻvār's source, but, as I shall try to show in 5.00, must be considered *to have been derived from the Āḻvār*.

4.35 **Āṇṭāḷ**

We have seen that in Parakālaṉ 'the girl' had begun to lose her autonomous symbolic function as found in Nammāḻvār, and tended to stand for the Āḻvār himself in the state of ecstasy. In Periyâḻvār the genre is altogether absent, but we have seen that his mysticism already incorporates erotic elements which in the other two Āḻvārs are still linked with the figure of the girl. In Āṇṭāḷ, herself a girl, these two tendencies can combine: all her songs are 'girl songs', and her personal emotionalism is erotic. Moreover, Periyâḻvār had achieved the integration of religious and folk songs, but he conceived it through the sentiments of (any) *mother*. Āṇṭāḷ does not appear in the rôle of a mother, but of a young girl singing such folk songs. Finally, as a girl, she had direct emotional access to the world of the *gopī*-myths, and frequently she sees herself as a *gopī*. Thus by being a girl herself, Kōtai can establish a direct analogy between the (mystic's) I, (the poetic) girl, (the mythical) *gopī*, and the actual speaker of a Kṛṣṇaite folk song. It is only in so far as Āṇṭāḷ is aware of the formal distinctions between these genres of poetry in the earlier Āḻvārs that she preserves certain boundaries between them in her own songs; they do not altogether merge into one.

From what has been said it is clear that all of Āṇṭāḷ's songs are relevant to our discussion and that an arrangement by genres would be fairly meaningless. I shall therefore begin with her long song, the *Tiruppāvai*, and then present the fourteen songs of her *Nācciyār-Tirumoḻi* in the order in which they appear in that work itself. General observations will be added after the presentation.

4.351 *The Tiruppāvai*[1]

This song of thirty stanzas hides behind seeming simplicity a considerable formal complexity which make it one of the most difficult

[1] The title is as puzzling as many other things in the song. But I believe that '[Song for] the [sand-image of] the Goddess' is the correct rendering, if only historically speaking. On *pāvai* in the song see below.

poems in the *Prabandham* to interpret correctly. Despite the hidden difficulties, the song has enjoyed greater popularity than any other Āḻvār poem, and figures today as the lonely survivor of the once rich Aḻvār culture.[2] The scholastics cherished the belief that popular appeal had to go hand in hand with theological profundity, and the quantity of commentarial material on these 30 stanzas far exceeds that on the TVM,[3] though almost all of it avoids the problems a literary or religious historian might have, and concentrates on the 'esoteric' meanings. Again, it is the only work of the *Prabandham* which has been translated, and that even more than once.[4]

The plot level of the song can be divided into three parts (excluding the *mudrikā* stanza 30). Stanzas 1 to 5 form an introduction: young girls tell us about a particular religious observance they are following during the month of *mārkaḻi* (December January). In 2 they list various elements of it, and items used in it, while 3 shows that its purpose is to bring rain and fertility to the country. Here we find the phrase 'praising our lady/doll',[5] while all stanzas of the TPā contain in their refrain 'O our lady!'[6] In my opinion, we are dealing here with an ancient fertility rite performed

[2] Singers (e.g., M.L. Vasantakumari) have made records of it in various musical styles (compare *Tiruppāvai saṅgita-varṇa-meṭṭukaḷ*, Śrīvilliputtūr, 1954, music by T.M.Tyagarajan), and particularly between 15 December and 15 January is frequently heard on the radio. But except for orthodox Vaiṣṇavas, few people have even heard of the *Prabandham*, or any of its other works.

[3] The two commentaries by Periyavāccāṉ Piḷḷai and Aḻakiya Maṇavāḷa pPerumāḷ Nāyaṉār alone run up to 9000 *ślokas* (= *granthas*).

[4] Hooper, 1929, only 24 stanzas, pp. 49-58; Tiruvachakamani (Mylapore, Sri Kapaleeswarar Devasthanan, 1962) pp. 16-31; D.Ramaswamy Iyengar (Madras, Sri Visishtadvaita Pracharini Sabha, 1967²); J. Filliozat 1972; Filliozat's work is disappointing, because of its scholarly pretensions (the other translations are of a popular nature). It is a Sanskritist's approach, ignoring totally the Tamil cultural context of the poem; the translation of the title 'Tiruppāvai' alone is symptomatic 'Le voeu de Fortune' (*pāvai* 'vow' only in the commentary *ad locum*, tiru = Śrī = Fortune!); of only interest I have found the reproductions (unfortunately of very bad printing quality) of South Indian illustrations to the poem. Only a full monograph can discuss all the intricacies of the poem; see 5.321 below (*ad* BhP X, 22) for further remarks on the TPā.

[5] *Nam pāvaikku ccārri.*

[6] The much discussed (*ēl ōr*) *em pāvāy*! Compare Hooper, 1929, p. 49; Pope, 1900, p. 104, note 4. *El ōr* is indeed difficult, but *not em pāvāy*! (vocative of *pāvai*).

by young girls.[7] But 4 and 5 impose a Kṛṣṇaite significance upon the archaic custom: Kṛṣṇa himself is the fertile rain-clouds[8] (4) and the rite is meant to induce *him* to remove all past sins (5). Stanzas 6 to 15 are addressed by the girls to various of their friends who are still asleep, waking them up and encouraging them to join in the observance of the rites. The girls have now come to Kṛṣṇa's house, where they sing stanzas 16 to 29. When the gate-keeper has let them into the courtyard, they first wake up Nanda, Yaśodā, etc., then (18) 'Nanda's daughter-in-law' Nap-Piṉṉai 'on whose breasts Kṛṣṇa's chest is resting' (19). Stanzas 19 to 22 constitute a miniature *paḷḷiyeḻucci*[9] for Kṛṣṇa himself—a song to wake up the god in the morning. Kṛṣṇa then comes forth 'like a lion from his mountain cave' (23), and like a king he gives an audience to the girls. In 24 to 29, the girls ask him for the various items used in the ritual, particularly the 'drum'.[10] In 29 the girls finally reveal a much more general desire: 'We have come to you today not only to obtain the drum—for all time to come we want to be joined with you and be accepted by you as slave-girls!'

I believe that the interpretation has to begin with what has already been said about Viṭṭucittaṉ's folk songs. Like a 'lullaby' (*tālēlō*) or the game of 'clapping hands' (*cappāṇi*), we can see in the particular rite mentioned here the *Sitz im Leben* (real life context) of the song. Note in 26: '. . . the things required—used by the ancient ones—to bathe during the month of *mārkaḻi*.'[11] An ancient fertility rite (stanza 3) is given a Kṛṣṇaite song. Thus the 'we' of the girls includes Āṇṭāḷ herself, who may well have participated in such an observance as a young girl. In its oldest layers, the ritual presumably centred on the *pāvai*, the sand-figure of a 'lady' or 'mother goddess', which the BhP interpreted as Kātyāyanī.[12]

[7] See below, and Gros, 1968, pp. xxxvif; for the Śaivite setting see Pope, 1900, p. 103.

[8] The *Tiruvempāvai* by Māṇikkavācakar has a parallel in stanza 16, which is of a much more elaborate, artificial nature. Kṛṣṇa -rain-clouds was natural in Tamil literature.

[9] The genre is fully illustrated by Toṇṭaraṭippoṭi in his *Tiruppaḷḷiyeḻucci* (see below).

[10] This motif probably hides the greatest difficulties; see p. 476.

[11] *Mārkaḻi nīr āṭuvāṉ mēlaiyār ceyvaṉakaḷ vēṇṭuvaṉa*. For similar rites during other months of the year see NTM I, II, and (without the name of the month) III.

[12] BhP X, 22 *'Les popuées de sable sont souvent mentionnées'* (in classical *caṇkam* literature) (Gros, 1968, p. xxxvii). See p. 647, *Akan.* 269, 19ff.

Āṇṭāḷ is clearly still aware of the fertility significance, which induces her to link it explicitly with Kṛṣṇa (4) and 'spiritualize' it (5). As a Kṛṣṇaite folk song, it alludes to the concrete environment in which the rite itself is now taking place. We hear of 'the great clamour of the white roaring conch [blown in] the temple of Kṛṣṇa' (6) which wakes up the people in the morning, and 14 mentions 'ascetics going to their temples to blow the conches'. Kṛṣṇa himself is asleep in his *kōyil*, his 'temple' or 'palace' (23). 'The gates with bells [hung on them]' (16) and 'the standing brass lamps'[13] (19) evoke the concrete temple setting of the girl's own environment, just as the *paḷḷiyeṟucci* has ritual associations. But, as in Periyâḻvār's folk songs, another associative structure is imposed upon all this: the world of myth. Those young girls—Āṇṭāḷ one of them—who in the setting of the temple perform an archaic fertility ritual with a new Kṛṣṇa motivation, are as it were aware of themselves as *gopīs* roaming through Vraja and speaking to Kṛṣṇa in Nanda's house, the *kōyil*. The concrete 'temple' is the symbolic link with the mythical 'palace', and the real environment is fused thereby with the realm of myth. Though unparalleled in its complexity, I think the song nevertheless illustrates exactly what we have encountered, in simpler forms, in the songs of the previous Āḻvārs.[14]

4.352 *TheNācciyār-Tirumoḻi*[15]

It is more difficult to detect in this poem a logical arrangement of the individual songs than it has been in the PTM or PâḻTM. Even so I think that increasingly passionate love is the overall theme, which in the last song is concluded by an antiphonic poem (as has been the case in PTM X, 1 and PâḻTM III, 9). Before I elaborate on this we may analyse the songs themselves.

I While the TPā was concerned with the *mārkaḻi nīr āṭal*, 'bathing every day of the month of *mārkaḻi* (December/January)', the present

[13] *Kuttu-viḷakku* (MTL *ad locum*) probably < *kuttu* 'upright' (*kuttu-kkāl* upright post). In the same stanza we also hear of a *kōṭu kāl kaṭṭil* 'cot/bed with ivory legs'.

[14] In the *Tiruvempāvai* (see note 8 above) all archaisms are absent; on the other hand, natural features like Kṛṣṇa - rain-cloud (see note 8) in the TPā are given a complicated metaphorical treatment. I would thus postulate that the *Tiruvempāvai* was written after the TPā and that Māṇikkavācakar—possibly—used it as his model.

[15] Parallel to *Perumāḷ-* and *Periyâḻvār-Tirumoḻi*, we can explain the title as: *Tirumoḻi* of the Lady-(Āḻvār), viz. of Āṇṭāḷ; *nācciyār* means 'lady', and is thus synonymous with *āṇṭāḷ*.

song moves on in the year to the two subsequent months, *tai* and *māci*, and deals with their particular observances. 'To bathe in the month of *tai* (January/February)' is an archaic custom known from *caṅkam* literature;[16] it is connected with young girls' hopes of obtaining husbands. Naturally, Āṇṭāḷ imposes a Kṛṣṇaite significance on it by specifying Kṛṣṇa as the desired husband. God Kāma (who is after all Kṛṣṇa's son Pradyumna[17]) is addressed in the stanzas, and the various rites[18] are meant for him. But so far the girl's efforts seem to have been in vain, and the song becomes an urgent request to Kāma to help her. 'Since my youth I have faithfully dedicated my growing breasts to the Lord of Dvārakā, and worshipped [him] constantly.' (4)

See, I could not live if other men enjoyed my large breasts that grew while I meditated on Kṛṣṇa; it would be like a jackal that roams in the forest stepping upon and sniffing with its nose at the oblations offered by Vedic sages. (5)

Though totally dedicated to Kṛṣṇa, her love has not found its physical fulfilment; she begs Kāma:

Can't you grant me this greatest honour on earth: that with his sacred hands he touches my soft large breasts and my splendid abdomen? (7)

But, perhaps realizing how daring a request this is, she modifies it and asks on a humbler note to touch His feet (8) and to serve Him (9).

II The mythical setting is more transparent here: the young *gopīs*[19] are making their 'little houses'[20] in the sand; Kṛṣṇa comes and spoils their game. Scolding him, the girls nevertheless reveal other emotions as well, besides anger: 'Do not torture us by casting

[16] See Gros, 1968, pp. xxxvif and *ad Pari.* XI, 85f.

[17] See p. 185, *Kali.* 140, 8, and 4.312, note 28.

[18] Among these are mentioned in stanzas 1-4: drawing fine pictures on the street (presumably the Tamil *kōlam* -Northern *rangoli*), bathing before sunrise, eating only once a day.

[19] In stanza 10: *āyar cirumiyar* 'young girls of the cowherds'. But this means, as in the TPā, that here too the concrete environment remains in the background: in stanza 1 we hear of another religious custom followed 'during the month of *paṅkuṉi* when Kāma comes'.

[20] Compare TVM VI, 2, 9; PTM III, 8, 8; PâlTM I, 2, 19; II, 8, 3; also *Kali.* 51, 2.

amorous glances at us!' (3) 'Though you destroyed [the houses], it is not anger that we feel in our insides, but a breaking and melting away...' (5) They know that his wilful destruction of their houses is his way of making advances to them; not only do they confess to him the effect this has on them, but anticipate (and invite?) his next move. 'If you united your body with ours, what would people here say?!' (9) The complex emotions of young girls is Āṇṭāḷ's favourite theme.

III The *gopīs*[21] have gone to a pool before sunrise to bathe in its cold water; Kṛṣṇa has sneaked up and taken away their clothes, and is now sitting in a *kuruntu* tree.[22] He is asking for a ransom which, as we gather, is rather improper. The girls express a wide range of sentiments, beg him, scold him and even insult him, threaten him and yet betray their deep love for him, and in a way are even egging him on. They are worried about a possible scandal (3), but do not forget, at the same time, to draw his attention to the fact that 'our village and our homes are far away' (7), 'Yaśodā won't do much to control you, she always lets you play the male' (9).[23] This last remark is clearly an assurance that he will get away with everything, including with what they are dying to have him do. In stanza 4, the girls play with the revered Rāma story in a remarkable twist: 'Now we understand how you could command a bunch of baboons—you [sitting] up there in the *kuruntu* tree!' He looks just like a monkey himself, no wonder that Hanumān became his friend. Then again they threaten him: 'What fun it would be, if our brothers chased you with spears in their hands!' (5)[24]

[21] Because we hear in 10: 'stanzas about the games of our lord with the cowherd girls'.

[22] This episode has become very famous from its treatment in Sanskrit in the BhP (X, 22); from there it became known as the *vastraharaṇa*. Already PTM III, 8, 8 and PâlTM II, 10, 2 make reference to it, as also *Āycci*. 8]ç; I have suggested above (pp.195f)that the episode may be linked with Kṛṣṇa's 'breaking the *kuruntu* tree', and that in *Akan*. 59 (Kṛṣṇa gives the *gopīs* leaf-frocks) an older version may have been preserved.

[23] As indeed Yaśodā won't, and does—see above PâḶTM III, 1, 10.

[24] Is this an allusion to TVM VI, 2, 7?: 'If our brothers came to hear of it, they would give you a fine beating, not worrying what is *dharma* and what is *pāpa*!'

IV The *gopīs*[25] are playing the game of *kūṭal*,[26] viz. drawing circles in the sand according to a fixed pattern, and depending on whether the lines finally 'join' (*kūṭal* means 'joining') or not, an answer 'yes' or 'no' arises. For the *gopīs* only one question is of interest, 'whether Kṛṣṇa will come to unite with us' (3), and they try, apostrophizing the lines themselves. to bewitch them so that they join up.

So far the songs (including the TPā) have suggested a more or less transparent mythical setting. This changes in the following song, where the old 'girl poems' seem to have provided the basic formal source of inspiration.

Song **V** (along with VIII to X) represents the genre 'address to nature'. In the present poem the girl (Āṇṭāḷ) apostrophizes a *kuyil*, the Indian cuckoo. She asks the bird whether: 'that I have lost my conch bracelet is not due to my desiring Kṛṣṇa?' (1) Impatiently she says 'O *kuyil*, you spend your time just sitting there and singing' and, repeating it in the refrain in all stanzas 'sing that He of coral mouth may come!' She gives a description of her emotional state.

> He entered inside me and crushed me to pieces; he let my life escape, and enjoys seeing me dance [in agony]. (2)
>
> My bones are melting, my eyes find no sleep for many days. I am whirling, and drown in the sea of suffering without the boat, the lord of Vēṅkata. (4)
>
> I have lost the beauty of my breasts and my red lips, since Hṛṣīkesa violated me. (6)
>
> In the sole desire to unite with Him my breasts grew large and jumped in joy. [Now] they make my life melt away and cause such agony. (7)

Begging for the bird's help, she makes various promises: 'I shall give you as companion my pretty parrot which I have brought up with sweet cooked rice and nectar-like milk' (5), and the very unusual: 'Only he and I know the promise on which we agreed between us. If you sing to Tirumāl there [that he may come], you may witness what I do with him!' (8) Nothing helps, and she turns to threatening the bird: 'If you want to stay in this grove, you have

[25] Thus again from the *mudrikā* (11): there we also find the *gopīs* characterised as having 'experienced in former times the *ūṭal*, *kūṭal*, *uṇartal* and *puṇartal*': these are poetical terms, referring to sulking and reconciliation, discovery of faults, and physical union of lovers.

[26] Compare TVir 34, where the game is mentioned. D.K.Cidambaranatha Mutaliyar, *Muttoḷḷāyiram*, Karaikkuṭi, 1943, pp. 45f, has a picture of a girl playing it.

to do one of two things: sing so that he comes, or bring my bracelet back!' (9) 'If you don't sing so that he comes, I shall drive you away from here.' (10) Like the girl in the PTMaṭ, her frustration expresses itself finally in an act of violence.

VI In this fascinating song, the girl relates to her friend a dream she has had: Viṣṇu arrived with all his heavenly splendour and his hosts, and celebrated marriage with her.[27] The various stanzas follow the elaborate wedding ceremony. This is one of the major instances:

> He who rules over us, Nārāyaṇa the noble one, took hold of my foot with his righteous hand and placed it on the grinding stone. My friend! All this I saw in my dream. (8)

But only in the realm of dreams can her frustration find relief, and in the following songs we turn again to the pain of separation.

VII The girl apostrophizes Viṣṇu's conch Pāñcajanya.[28] The first few stanzas congratulate the conch on its good fortune in enjoying physical contact with Kṛṣṇa's hand and mouth. An undercurrent of envy and jealousy become more prominent, until the girl bursts out:

> You are committing a crime by your drink—the nectar of His mouth—and your bed—His hand—and all women proclaim their enmity to you! (8)

She wonders why Kṛṣṇa's queens don't smash it to pieces since it alone drinks 'what should be drunk in common: the nectar of Mātavaṉ's mouth' (9). We see here a new poetic spirit emerging which can apostrophize mythical objects like the conch, and build up a symbolism on clearly intellectual premises—resonances of the Sanskritic *alaṅkāras*.

VIII This is another song addressed to nature, here to the rain-clouds (hanging over Vēṅkatam).[29] First she wonders whether they are announcing Kṛṣṇa's arrival (1), or whether they are at

[27] Already in PTM VIII, 5, 9 we hear 'the happiness of mind which he gave me in my dream, when he came and entered me, and when I embraced him.' Also in *Kali.* 142, 34f we hear: '. . . who showed himself [to me] in a dream'. Śrīvaiṣṇava hagiography gave a literal rendering to the dream; according to the DSC (canto XII, 1-20 in particular), Periyâḻvār arranged an actual *svayaṃvara* for his daughter, at which all the Viṣṇus (sic! verse 18: *Viṣṇūn*) came together. She chose Raṅganātha, and married him—then to be absorbed into his *vigraha*.

[28] In BhP X, 21, 9 the *gopīs* envy Kṛṣṇa's flute in a similar vein.

[29] The association of Vēṅkaṭam with rain-clouds is common; compare, for example, TVir 31.

least bringing some news from him (2). Like the *Yakṣa* in Kālidāsa's *Meghadūta,* she makes them her messengers:

'Tell Nārāyaṇa about my pain, about my disease—who entered me so that my soul rotted away, like a wood-apple that is eaten by a gnat.' (6)

And again:

'Tell him that my soul will survive only if one day he enters me so that the sandal paste is wiped off my breasts, and stays with me.' (7)

But as if shocked by her own audacious request, she becomes more humble:

Will he one day send a kind word to me, who am about to drop down like a withered leaf of the *yarcum* tree in the rainy season? (8)

Again the mood changes, and as in other songs of hers, frustration breaks out with a threat:

The people in the world will not like hearing that He unthinkingly inflicts suffering on a girl! (9)

IX The girl is walking around Tirumāliruñcōlai and speaks to a variety of 'listeners'. Whatever she sees reminds her of Kṛṣṇa and heightens her pain. The *indragopas* (fire-flies), spreading out 'everywhere like reddish saffron powder' (1), remind her of the net from which she cannot escape. The white jasmine is, as it were, laughing at her and showing its white teeth;[30] she also has to think of His flower-garland (2). She asks the dark blue *kāyā* and *karuviḷai* flowers how she can survive (3), and wonders how other black or darkish flowers (*karuviḷai* and bilberry), animals (*kuyil* and peacock), and *kaḷam* (fruits) received such agonizing power from Him (4). She has offered a hundred vessels of rice and ghee, and wonders whether He will accept these gifts (6) so that she can serve Him herself (7).

X In the same vein, the girl addresses various animals and flowers, such as Aṇṭāḷ might see in her garden. For instance to the 'climbing shrub' she says:

I fear those with beautiful mouths. It happened to me, a sinner, that He whose couch is a serpent has a double tongue just like his snake. (3)

[30] The theme is found also in *caṅkam* poetry; e.g. *Kuṟu.* 126; 'the cool rainy season

With an imaginative twist to an everyday scene:

O peacocks! I am poor and have no money to give you for your dance-performance. Govinda turned haughty and indifferent, and took all my fortune away. (7)

The rain-clouds' downpour is associated with a bronze-caster: 'My beautiful lover—it is as if He had put clay around me and poured wax into my heart. . .' (8) The ocean, deprived of its nectar by Viṣṇu, reminds her of 'Māyavaṉ who entered my body and stole its blood' (9).

XI Speaking to her mother, the girl laments the miserable condition caused by her unfulfilled love. Approaching the subject from various angles, she ponders about the contradictions and irrationality of myth and reality, looking for clues in the former in order to understand the latter. Although 'He is the meaning of the four *Vedas*, yet he took all meaning from my body' (6)—resonance of Nammāḻvār's dialectics. In an angrier mood she says:

'Without eating or sleeping he tore the roaring ocean apart, eaten up by the desire for a woman's body.[31] Forgetting [everything else] he only thought of things good for himself. Indeed he got into all kinds of crazes.' (7)

She becomes more conciliatory, and thinks of Him, as if to comfort herself, as 'the protector of women' and remembers the 'firm determination' he showed to win Rukmiṇī (9). Thus, unlike some of her other songs, this one does not end on a threatening note. Āṇṭāḷ seems to find some consolation in those same myths that illustrate Māyōṉ's recklessness (comp. TVM IV, 2).

XII In this elaborate poem the girl argues with the gossiping and slandering women of the neighbourhood. She blames them for their ignorant failure to understand her love, and challenges them to 'take her to Āypāṭi' (2, variations in other stanzas), if they really care about her. This is not a *gopī* speaking, but the poetic symbol of Āṇṭāḷ herself. To be taken to Aypāṭi thus means being transformed from a person in space and time into a witness of the mythi-

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takes the small buds of the *mullai* as its shining teeth and laughs at us.' In Hāla (364, = Weber I p. 199) the ripe cotton laughs.

31 This refers to the Rāma story: in his desire to reach Sītā in Laṅka, Rāma forced the ocean to let him pass over to the island.

cal deeds of Kṛṣṇa.[32] Thus her breasts are exclusively for the (baby) Kṛṣṇa, as she states in this fanciful stanza:

Look at these breasts that are ashamed when they see mean men and close their 'eyes' with the fine breast-cloth, for [they are determined] to enter none but Kṛṣṇa's mouth! (4)

The various stanzas refer to different localities and the connected mythical incidents, and Āṇṭāḷ is going on an imaginary pilgrimage, which begins in Mathurā, goes on to Gokula, the Yamunā, the pool of Kāliya, Vṛndāvana, Govardhana, and finishes in Dvārakā. **XIII** As in the previous song, the girl expresses her desire to transcend her present situation; but here it is not the mythical incidents of Vṛndāvana that she wants to witness: she is craving for the physical contact, if not of Kṛṣṇa himself, of various mythical objects associated with him. Again the stanzas are arguments with unsympathetic society.

Do not give foolish advice, you outsiders, you pour acid into my wounds. Fan me with the yellow waist cloth of Perumāṉ so ignorant of women's suffering, that my pain may subside! (1)

In the following three stanzas passionate love and desire reach their point of culmination.

Whether I weep or whether I worship him, he won't show
his form to me.
He does not come to embrace me, to hold me close,
to enter me and wrap himself all round me.
Apply to my face, to cool it, the water from the
flute's holes[33]
which Māl blows when he herds the cattle. (5)

Press down, flatten out, tie up tightly my breasts
to remove the stain of dedicating them to His
beautiful strong arms.

[32] We are dealing here with a very inchoate stage of a development which much later conceived of the events of Vṛndāvana as eternal happenings, and of bhakti as the participation in these mysteries. The *Padma-* and *Brahmavaivarta-Purāṇas* illustrate this.

[33] Tnis could be interpreted as an allusion to the cult of possession; compare above TVM IV, 6, 5f and CTMaṭ 9, where sprinkiing with 'white dust' appears as the means of bringing the girl back to consciousness.

His mother bore Him as a creature without use,
and brought Him up as a bitter *margosa*. (7)

He did not enquire after me, did not bother that
I was melting, crushed.
I shall tear off with their very roots these
breasts of mine,
for they gained nothing from looking at Him
who robs and plunders and is full of deceit.
I shall throw them towards His chest to extinguish
their burning! (8)

This is the most vicious threat and the most passionate *peruntiṇai* expressed in the *Prabandham*; it is as if Kaṇṇaki of the ancient Tamil epic[34] is speaking here. Yet it is not the final note of the poem.

XIV After this passionate climax of Āṇṭāḷ's erotic mysticism, this unassuming song comes as an anticlimax, yet it is significant that she does not end in despair (just as the girl in the PTMaṭ has woven praise and hope into her final threat). The song may be taken as showing how the *bhakta* community supports the individual (compare XII and XIII, where the girl asks *other people* for comfort). In the first half of each stanza, the girl asks 'Have you seen . . . Kṛṣṇa?', and in each second half the chorus replies 'Indeed we have seen Him in Vṛndāvana'. The 'we' who have 'seen' provide assurance for the girl who has not yet seen. It is as if balanced faith (or the calmness of actual sight?) is seen by Āṇṭāḷ as the only possible corrective to her extreme passion and her agonizing desire to come, as a physical person, into contact with Kṛṣṇa.

4.353 *Summary*

The logic underlying the arrangement of Viṭṭucittaṉ's or Parakālaṉ's *Tirumoḻi* is transparent; with Āṇṭāḷ it is less obvious, though I think that here too a systematic development is discernible. Periyâḻvār basically followed the emotions of a mother over the years of bringing up a boy or girl; I believe that this provides

[34] When Kaṇṇaki hears of the injustice done to her husband Kōvalaṉ, she tears off one of her breasts, and throwing it on the town Maturai, sets it ablaze. Āṇṭāḷ, almost certainly alluding to this event, alters it by stating that the breasts themselves are ablaze, and can be extinguished only when thrown at Māyōṉ.

us with the key also for Āṇṭāḷ, who follows the emotional development of a girl. Thus we may see in the TPā and the first four songs of the NTM something of the innocence of early childhood. The natural environment is still merged with the realm of myth, the temple *is* the palace, and Kṛṣṇa is freely addressed. At the next stage, this paradisical unawareness is destroyed, and the girl realizes the difference between the world of myth and her natural surroundings. She has to turn to nature (in V, VIII to X), begging it to communicate on her behalf with Kṛṣṇa who is now far away. This is the time when the adolescent girl dreams, as if thereby the dichotomy of real environment and myth could be transcended (VI). Then the girl reaches womanhood, and her passions increase. Myth appears now in direct contradiction to reality (XI, suggested already in VII). After the dreamy stage of adolescence, when she spoke in solitude to the *kuyil* or at the most to her intimate girlfriend (in VI), as a grown-up woman she has now become aware of herself as a member of society: first it is the mother to whom she turns (XI), and then society at large (in the neighbouring women, XII and XIII). Conscious of her physical being and desires, she refuses simply to merge back into the ordinary life society offers, an ordinary marriage. She wants to transcend her social limitations, be taken into Vṛndāvana or at least obtain physical contact with Kṛṣṇa's clothes, etc. But her passionate desires can only result in frustration, and instinctively she turns to the same society for help; this is implied in the requests she makes: *they* can take her to Vṛndāvana, only *they* could fan her with his cloth. But all they can offer is an appeal to her faith: 'we have seen . . .' (XIV).

One could probably argue about some of the details of my interpretation, but I believe that on the whole this is what Āṇṭāḷ wants to convey: the emotional development of a girl from childhood to womanhood, and the various tensions that arise from becoming increasingly aware of one's natural environment, oneself, and society as three distinct factors, and of myth as something lying beyond all three. For example, in the TPā it is almost impossible to separate the layers of myth (the *gopīs* go to Nanda's house) and reality (young girls go to the temple), but in XII the desperate passion underlying the desire to be taken to Vṛndāvana results precisely from the realization that the girl's village is *not* Vṛndāvana.

I think we can detect here a certain polarization; in Nammāḻvār

we had three autonomous symbolic structures, while with Parakālaṉ, 'the girl' tended to become more directly linked with the mystic's I; but in Āṇṭāḷ the girl is now intrinsically her own I. No doubt, the older formal material of the girl genre is not altogether abandoned, but in spite of allusions, for example, to the rain-clouds (VIII) or the *mullai* (X, 4), the emotions (as personal passionate outbursts) no longer fit within the traditional *akattiṇai*. They have become *peruntiṇai* (see in particular XIII). At the same time, due to the disappearance of the *akattiṇai* as an autonomous symbolic structure, the world of myth has emerged as the second pole of the girl's emotional awareness. Myth is now providing the associations and imagery; with Nammāḻvār this was still the function of the *akattiṇai*. Already with Periyâḻvār we saw the cosmos of Kṛṣṇa mythology emerging as the centre of orientation (though there in folk songs). With Āṇṭāḷ, it figures as the primary emotive force in her own bhakti. By all this I do not mean merely that we have some songs in which the world of a young girl is fused with that of a *gopī*. Even in the later songs, myth remains the central stimulus of the girl's emotions: in XI she is agonized by the contradiction between myth and reality, and in XII and also XIII the mythical cosmos appears as the aim of all her passionate desires.

These developments in the psychology of bhakti are of a fundamental nature. With Nammāḻvār the *akattiṇai* poems figured as symbols in which Kṛṣṇa could be relished (in so far as they expressed his absence); their 'landscape' constituted a realm of its own (metaphorically speaking), in which both the mystic's environment and Kṛṣṇa's mythical remoteness were transcended and in which—in the aesthetic experience—the I met Kṛṣṇa. As I tried to show for Parakālaṉ, any rapprochement of the I and the girl had to reduce the balancing effect of the poetic landscape, as long as the I remained aware of itself according to the premises of Tamil anthropocentrism. I think there cannot be any doubt now that Āṇṭāḷ's self-awareness is typically Southern. One only has to look at a stanza like XIII, 8, or at the recurring references to her breasts, to realise how much she is a person 'of flesh and blood', how strongly she is aware of, and accepts positively, her physical nature. No other Āḻvār is so definite about it. Perhaps we ought to be more precise here. Though I think it is legitimate to regard many songs of Āṇṭāḷ as personal expressions, as belonging to the level of mysticism, we must not overlook the close similarities to the symbolic language

typical of the girl poems. In other words, even when Āṇṭāḷ speaks directly about her personal emotions, she does it by resorting to certain typical symbols: her breasts (NTM I, 4f. 7. V, 6f. VIII, 7. XII, 4. XIII, 7f) or her abdomen (NTM I, 7). Just as with other Āḻvārs the eyes function as conventional symbol, these can be regarded as poetic symbols denotative of a certain form of self-awareness. But all this means that emotional Kṛṣṇa bhakti has reached not just its climax, but also its most critical point. As a physical being, love of Kṛṣṇa keeps her nevertheless from physical fulfilment (see already I, 5, and particularly XII, 4) in this world with any man. On the other hand, the cosmos of myth—which figures so pronouncedly as the one and only alternative to physical reality—remains inaccessible to her. The dilemma seems complete; I wonder how far one can press the 'turning back to society' (in XII to XIV) as providing a solution for the tension, for Āṇṭāḷ suggests it only in a very subdued and indirect manner (not unlike the girl of the PTMaṭ in her final threat). However, both in Parakālaṉ (e.g., PTM VII, 4) and, as we shall see presently, in Kulaśekhara, the community of the *bhaktas does* figure quite prominently as a new intervening (and thus tension-relieving) entity between the individual and the Kṛṣṇa of inaccessible nature. On the other hand it is quite clear in Āṇṭāḷ that any conception of Viṣṇu's immanence as *antaryāmī* or as the goal of *yoga* exercises is without emotional relevance. She expresses, as does no other Āḻvār, a pronounced emotional contrast between the 'here' and 'there', and Kṛṣṇa as the remote god is 'there'.

A few observations on Āṇṭāḷ's literary background may conclude this summary. A rough count of mythological references[35] in the NTM reveals a pronounced accent on 'Kṛṣṇa/Vṛndāvana' material (I have counted about sixty individual allusions, quite apart from the mythical plot of some songs). Other *avatāra* myths cannot compete with this: Varāha (1), Nṛsiṃha (2), Rāma (10), Vāmana (15). Thus for all practical purposes, 'myth' means in Āṇṭāḷ (and it goes without saying, also in Viṭṭucittaṉ) above all the Vṛndāvana episodes of Kṛṣṇa. It is difficult to say from just which source she derived her knowledge of these episodes (her father's *Tirumoḻi* would be an obvious source[36] and we have seen that the *Harivaṃśa*

[35] Compare above Table XVI, where a similar count is given for the Early Āḻvārs.
[36] Note the connection of NTM III, 9 with PâḻTM III, 1, 10.

has influenced that work[37]). While for most of the episodes the Southern *Sitz im Leben* is a sufficient explanation (*mārkal̲i* and *tai nīr āṭal, kūṭal,* worship of Kāma), even for the 'stealing of the clothes' we have parallels in other works in the *Prabandham*, etc.[38] But again I think that we can assume as almost certain that Āṇṭāḷ did not know the Br/ViP version of Kṛṣṇa's amorous adventures. I simply cannot believe that Āṇṭāḷ, who so passionately expresses a mysticism of separation, would have missed the chance to exploit the suffering of the *gopīs* when Kṛṣṇa had gone to Mathurā.

On the other hand, I suspect that Āṇṭāḷ was familiar with Bhāsa's *Bālacarita*. In stanza 23 of the TPā we read:

> . . . as the lion, asleep in his den / in the mountains at the time of the rains, /. . ./ shakes himself . . ./ and with a roar moves out of his lair.[39]

In Act III (after verse 1) of the *Bālacarita* we find what looks like the brief original: 'Here approaches lord Dāmodara like a lion who comes out of his cave.'[40] Compare also the question in stanza 15 whether all the girls have come together, with a similar one in Bhāsa.[41] But this once again means that Āṇṭāḷ's fundamental source of inspiration was Southern, Tamil culture, for Bhāsa can hardly explain or account for the essential features of her mysticism.

4.36 **Kulacēkaran̲ and his** Perumāḷ-Tirumol̲i[1]

The ten songs of Kulacēkaran̲ represent a good cross-section of the material discussed so far, and we encounter again some features which have been described as later developments. The Āl̲vār is probably the most emotional (in a general sense) among the male Āl̲vārs; the eroticism of Kṛṣṇa's adventures with the *gopīs* is fully brought out now, and complexes intervening between Kṛṣṇa and the mystic have become pronounced (the other, true *bhaktas*,

[37] See above 4.342, with notes 23f.

[38] See NTM III, with note 22.

[39] Translation in Zvelebil, 1974, pp. 103f.

[40] See p. 81 with note 110.

[41] See p. 82

[1] 'Perumāḷ' is the title of a Cēra dynasty (with, incidentally, many Kulaśekharas), and thus the title can easily be explained (parallel Pâl̲TM or NTM) as '*Tirumol̲i* by the Perumāḷ king'.

and secondary characters on the mythical plane). We also see now the figure of Rāma emerging as an object of devotion.

The first five songs are uncontrived personal poems in which the king expresses his bhakti sentiments. The second half of his *Tirumoḻi* contains mythical songs; the *girl genre* thus has not been used, just as in Periyâḻvār. Three songs deal with Rāma, viz. VIII to X. The first one is a *tālēlō* (lullaby) in which incidents of Rāma's life are narrated; it is a folk song spoken as it were by any mother.[2] In song IX, the speaker is Daśaratha, Rāma's father, who expresses his deep regret and sorrow over having sent his son into the forest. To have to part from his son is killing him.[3] The final song, X, opens with the question: 'When then will be the day when we can see, our eyes filled with rapture, Rāma who. . .' (1) and then gives a summary of the Rāmāyaṇa.

Songs VI and VII concern Kṛṣṇa's youth in Vraja and require a more detailed discussion. But I shall begin with other songs to illustrate the king's direct expressions of bhakti, and then turn to the Kṛṣṇa songs.

In song III Kulacēkaraṉ declares his contempt for all worldly things, for he is 'mad about the lord of Araṅkam' (the free refrain), and in the following song IV he tells us that his greatest desire is to be born, in one future life, as a stork (1), a fish (2), a *campaka* flower (4), etc., in the temple of Veṅkaṭam.

The other three personal songs offer whole catalogues of ecstatic symptoms.

I Each stanza repeats the longing to see Māyōṉ:

> When then will be the day of great bliss when my eyes shall see the beautiful figure in the large temple of Tiruvaraṅkam? (1)

In their descriptive portions, the stanzas are inspired by the sculpture in the temple (Nārāyaṇa reclining on the serpent Ananta), but the longing to see the god *in* the statue involves a desire to join the serpent Ananta), but the longing to see the god *in* the statue involves

[2] PâḻTM I, 4 (spoken by Yaśodā) is a close parallel. The commentators have tried to give also the present song a mythical speaker, suggesting Kauśalyā. But she is mentioned in the first and third stanzas in the third person, so that this is an artificial explanation. To understand the song as 'folk song' avoids the difficulty, since as a lullaby *any* mother would be the speaker.

[3] This original song has its closest parallels in the various poems belonging to the girl genre (and adopted on the mythical plane, PâḻTM III, 8) in which the mother is grieved by the girl's elopement: TVM VI, 7 and PTM III, 7.

a desire to join the crowd of *bhaktas*. Here are some examples of this twofold bhakti longing.

(When then will be the day) of praising Māyōṉ so that my mouth will ache... (2), of meeting His servants (=*bhaktas*) there and scattering flowers at His feet!... (3), of praising Him with joyful poems in lovely Tamil and in the Northern language[4]... (4), when my heart will totally melt away on seeing the sacred face and mixing with the crowds of sages... (6), when dancing and looking at Him, praising Him and melting away, remembering Him and weeping floods of tears—mind's water of joy—without satiation, I sing his many qualities and join the crowd of His servants... (9), when I too become one of His servants, seeing them in great joy in the sacred hall of Araṅkam... (10)[5]

II Again the Āḻvār speaks about Araṅkam, linking his own devotion with that of the *bhaktas* (*toṇṭar* 'servants'). To reverence them constitutes the fulfilment of his religion, because they live out fully what bhakti has come to mean. Once again I reproduce the catalogue of symptoms mentioned here. 'Calling out the names of Kṛṣṇa (1f.4), agitation (1), dancing (1f.8f), singing (2f.8f), praising (1.4), intoxication (1.8), remembering His mysteries (2), talking about them (3), weeping (3.7.9), horripilation (5.9), tottering about (8), getting up restless (8f), trembling (9), leanness (9).'[6]

V Kulacēkaraṉ here expresses his complete dependence on Māyōṉ through a number of similes taken from ordinary life. He may at times appear harsh or even cruel—through his unpredictable *māyā*—but the Āḻvār has no alternative but to love Him, because His love conditions and determines the human response. The Āḻvār feels 'like a child thrust aside by his angry mother' (1), 'like a girl of good family' remaining faithful to her husband even when he is unfaithful to her (2), 'like the subjects of a ruthless king' (3), 'like an ill person who cannot but love his doctor' (4), 'like a large bird' that abandons the ship's mast, but returns to it when it finds no land (5), etc,

On the whole, the religious awareness here expressed seems rather different from that of the other Āḻvārs. At the most funda-

[4] This line must have contributed considerably to the popular assumption (in my opinion unjustified, see p. 256, note 56, No. 2) of the Āḻvār's authorship of the Sanskrit *Mukundamālā*. 'Northern language' is idiomatic in Tamil for 'Sanskrit'.

[5] See the Aāp which expresses a similar rapture before the Arankam statue.

[6] See above PTM VII, 7 for a similar characterization of the 'true *bhakta*'.

mental level we have a humble surrender to Māyōn's uncontrollable tricks and reactions (his *māyā*), the only way to cope with them in view of the Āḻvār's insignificance and feeling of inferiority. This awareness of unworthiness is particularly strengthened through the comparison with the 'true' *bhaktas* who have realized the full range of ecstatic bhakti. His desire is thus as much to see Kṛṣṇa as to become a real *bhakta*. But before trying to interpret this further, we must look at the two songs dealing with the mythical Kṛṣṇa, which illustrate other facets of the Āḻvār's attitude.

In song VI, the key theme is Kṛṣṇa's *māyam*, as the *gopīs* have experienced it.[7] A *gopī* speaks to Kṛṣṇa with biting sarcastic words. She is upset about his unfaithfulness, but perhaps even more angry about her own weakness that makes her continue to love him. Like the Āḻvār in song V, the *gopī* has no alternative but to surrender to loving him. At the same time, it is as if the passion found in Āṇṭāḷ's girl poems has entered on the mythical plane; unlike the young *gopīs* of Āṇṭāḷ, we find here a *woman* speaking. Stanza 2 may illustrate this:

> When you saw in the eastern house[8] a girl churning the curds, you told me: 'I'll just go and help her with the churning!' Having seen her thievish glances, you went into her house. I well understand the way you were 'churning the cold curds': her hair, alive with flowers and bees, hung dishevelled and quivering, her face glistened with sweat, her red lips trembled. . .

The last stanza (9) could be interpreted either as a prohibition or a suggested invitation: 'You made love to all the girls and softly played the flute. Now don't (or: you don't)[9] come any more to play to *us* the music on your piping flute! No, not even for a day!'

VII This is another original song in which Devakī, Kṛṣṇa's real mother, laments about the motherhood she has missed, since her baby grew up with the foster-mother Yaśodā.[10] She imagines

[7] Parallel songs are: TVM VI, 2, PTM X, 8.

[8] For this idiom see above 4.343, PâḻTM III, 1, note 29.

[9] *Pōtārātē* can be either negative imperative or indicative. Even when taking it as indicative ('you don't come') the song does not refer to Kṛṣṇa's departure to Mathurā, leaving the *gopīs* behind (as we found it in Br/ViP), for stanzas 5, 6, and 7 are addressed to Kṛṣṇa in person, telling him to go away.

[10] On the whole, Devakī's emotions are not looked at in Vaiṣṇava literature; but among the Jains, in the *Antagaḍaadasāo* III, 8 (trans. Barnett, 1907, pp. 68-71),

all the deeds of Kṛṣṇa in Vraja, and envies Yaśodā, who can witness them all personally:

> O my child, beautiful and young! To hold you close in my arms, to see you looking into my face with your splendid eyes, while you prattle charmingly and smile sweetly, put one of my breasts into your mouth and rub the nipple between your fingers—alas! all this I have missed, I have missed! (7)

Among all the figures in the Kṛṣṇa myths, Devakī resembles the human *bhakta* most closely: full of love for Kṛṣṇa and longing to see him and all his deeds and to be in physical contact with him, both have to content themselves with hearing about them and imagining them.

For Kulacēkaraṉ, Māyōṉ is only part of the problem, the other part being bhakti itself. The distance between himself and Kṛṣṇa has widened, and his primary longing is directed towards perfect bhakti in the ecstasy of which Kṛṣṇa can be grasped, if only as the distant god. In IV this situation is expressed in the desire to be reborn in the close proximity of Vēṅkaṭam—not to be in direct physical contact with Kṛṣṇa 'himself', but to proceed one step further towards ideal bhakti. In II, this attitude manifests itself in the obeisance to the real *bhaktas*, just as in I the 'longing to see' is intrinsically linked with 'being together with' the *bhaktas*. In V the Āḻvār suggests the great distance through the various similes he uses, and in VII this remoteness of the Āḻvār from the mythical events is indicated through the choice of Devakī, just as in IX we concentrate on the emotions of Daśaratha who is separated from Rāma. Bhakti has become an ideal, something to strive for, and at the same time, an institution (the temple where the *real bhaktas* live); the 'ordinary *bhakta*' has nothing but his surrender and faith to offer.[11] Undoubtedly these are signs of a later stage in the

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we hear of Devakī who grieves: 'I have not known the joy of childhood of even one of them [my children killed by Kaṃsa].' Did Kulacēkaraṉ know this or a similar Jain account?

11 We can see here *one* of the beginnings of later Viśiṣṭâdvaita understanding: there *prapatti* 'humble surrender' becomes the most important form of devotion, over and against *bhakti*. But while PāḶTM V can be taken as illustrating *prapatti*, what I have everywhere called *bhakti* does not correspond to what in Viśiṣṭâdvaita is meant by it: there it refers strictly to the *bhakti-yoga* of the BhG and the ViP. 'Ecstatic emotional bhakti' lies on the whole outside the awareness of the Ācāryas.

development of the Āḻvār movement, and stylistically the king's poetry confirms this.[12]

However, Kulacēkaraṉ is also aware of an element that unifies the by now extended range of his experience: Kṛṣṇa's *māyam*. It is Kṛṣṇa's 'means' by which he subjugates the Ālvār: 'Even though you cause unending pain to me through your *māyā* . . .' (V, 4); it is the disconcerting aspect of Kṛṣṇa's character for the *gopī*: 'As your body grows, alas! so does your *māyā* along with it!' (VI,3). It is both full of wonders (in VII, 11: all his miracles are done 'through his *māyā*') and irrational: 'Although the milk of your mother's breast was purest nectar, you sneaked away to feed at the ogress' breast and drank her poison!' (VI, 4) In human terms this particular side of *māyā* looks different: 'They laugh at you for that and call you *mad*.' (ibid.) This links in turn with what the Āḻvār says about bhakti: in II, 9 and III the *bhakta* himself is 'mad'. The 'madness' of religious ecstasy is the human response to the madness implied in Kṛṣṇa's *māyā*: ideal bhakti is 'madness', and only by means of it can something of the gulf created between the *bhakta* and Kṛṣṇa by the latter's *māyā* be bridged. Basically this is similar to Nammāḻvār's conception,[13] but Kulacēkaraṉ has become aware of 'bhakti' as something outside himself, something that *he ought to reach out for*.

Śrīraṅgam has emerged as a definite centre of Āḻvār religion, and the songs that illustrate the Perumāḷ-king's awareness of bhakti as an institutionalized ideal (I to III) are dedicated to that temple. We may now turn to the Minor Āḻvārs, most of whom belonged exclusively to that temple.

4.37 **Minor Āḻvārs: Tiruppāṇ, Toṇṭaraṭippoṭi, Madhurakavi, and the** Tiruccantaviruttam

None of the five poems written by the Later or Minor Āḻvārs relates directly to our investigation, because they are not concerned with emotional bhakti in the full sense of my definition. Both the *akattiṇai* and the mythical (*gopī*) frames are absent, and only in

[12] See PāḷTM II, 3 for the following very un-Tamil hyperbole: 'I shall adorn my head with the lovely mud from the precious feet of the *bhaktas* who turn into mud [the earth] of the sacred hall of Śrīraṅgam with their tears that flow like the Kāveri river.'

[13] See above pp. 345-8.366.370f

Tiruppāṇ are resonances of ecstasy found. These features are interesting for us in a negative way, and thus I shall discuss the poems very briefly here, for they throw some light on the social position of the Āḻvār movement during what was presumably its final stage.[1]

Two of these Āḻvārs clearly belong to Śrīraṅgam, for the *Amalaṉ ādi ppirāṉ* and the *Tiruppaḷḷiyeḻucci* (Aāp and TPaḷ) are inspired by and written for the idol in that temple, and the *Tirumālai* (TMāl) mentions Araṅkam in practically all of its stanzas. The *Tiruccantaviruttam* (TCV) too can be assumed to belong to this temple.[2] As we can gather from these poems and also from other later Āḻvārs (see Map 6), Śrīraṅgam had emerged as the spiritual centre of Vaiṣṇavism in the South, and the two early Ācāryas Nāthamuni and Yāmuna were closely connected with it.

4.371 *The Amalaṉ āti ppirāṉ*

The **Aāp** is possibly the earliest of the five poems to be discussed here: emotionalism and phraseology evoke the bhakti typical of the Major Āḻvārs. It is a song describing Viṣṇu's body, reclining on the serpent, from the feet to the head, limb by limb.[3] The Āḻvār's senses, or better his eyes, seem to devour each part of the body and bring them into his soul, where they cause great ecstasy. E.g.: 'His sacred feet appear to be right inside my eyes' (1) or 'the waist chain stays inside my soul and roams about there' (4). These expressions derive from the Early Āḻvārs or Nammāḻvār;[4] it seems that the song has had a considerable influence in turn on later bhakti poetry.[5] The Āḻvār does not sign his song; we know of his 'name' and one event in his life only from two *taṉiyaṉ* stanzas which are probably not later than the end of the tenth century.[6]

[1] It is obviously impossible to fix any precise dates for these very short poems. Only by looking at all the religious characteristics they express, and comparing them with earlier works does 'late' become at least a workable qualification.

[2] See Map 6 for the distribution of temples referred to. Araṅkam is referred to 9 times, Kuṭantai 6, Vēṅkaṭam 3 or 4, etc. Thus the TCV makes Araṅkam certainly its spiritual centre, if not its geographical one.

[3] Another *pādākeśa* is PâḶTM I, 3; compare TMāl 16-21.

[4] See p. 334; compare p. 278.

[5] I have tried to show this with reference to Veṅkaṭanātha, Vilvamaṅgala, Mādhavendra Purī, etc. See Hardy, 1974, pp. 34-41.

[6] Both are attributed to disciples of Yāmuna, viz. Periya– and Tirumalai–Nampi. They would thus be a century (or more) earlier than the first hagiographical work, the DSC.

He is said here to have been a *pāṇar*, a bard, and thus his 'name' Tiruppāṇ Āḻvār. Both stanzas refer to his having been carried by a sage,[7] which seems to be an allusion to a story fully told later in the hagiographical works (a temple brahmin injured the Āḻvār—by then *pāṇar* = *śūdra*—when trying to drive him away; as a punishment sent by Viṣṇu he then had to carry the Āḻvār on his shoulders right in front of the idol). It is just possible that we have here a reference to a struggle between the Tamil hymnists and the brahmin temple establishment.[8]

4.372 *The Tiruppaḷḷiyeḻucci and Tirumālai*

However, in the **TPaḷ**, we have a Tamil song by a temple brahmin, which is clearly designed to be sung every morning before the idol to wake up the god. The song itself very elaborately describes the morning scene in the temple, when people and gods have arrived to pay their obeisance to Viṣṇu.

The second song by the Āḻvār, the **TMāl**, is a personal expression of bhakti matters. Kṛṣṇa myths and erotic bhakti are absent. Instead, the Āḻvār shows himself to be a staunch 'puritan': with scorn he speaks of those 'caught in the net called "eyes of women"' (16), confesses that once 'I became a criminal for the sake of women with scarlet lips and abandoned all moral ties' (31), and says 'ensnared in the net of women with deer-glances' (36). His aversion to anything erotic stems from a fundamental aversion to the sensuous: he recommends 'imprisoning the senses' (1), scorns 'these vile slaves who are "yoked" in great pains to enjoy the pleasures of women' (5), speaks of 'the hell of living [attached to] the senses' (13). This is indeed very different from the earlier Āḻvār bhakti, and even Periyâḻvār, in spite of his one or two negative remarks,[9] still had a very positive attitude to *eros*; but the Ācāryas will exemplify tacitly precisely the puritanism which we can derive without difficulty from the 'Upaniṣadic ideology'. The Āḻvār expresses a

[7] Skt. stanza by Periya-Nampi: 'Munivāhanaṃ' (who had the sage as his vehicle); Tamil stanza by Tirumalai-Nampi: '. . . the sage who had carried him.' Skt. hagiography calls the Āḻvār Munivāhana (compare Veṅkaṭanātha's *Munivāhanabhogam*, a commentary on the song).

[8] See below for clearer examples of this struggle.

[9] See above 4.341, with note 12.

pronounced awareness of sin (particularly 25-33), which makes him say 'I am a criminal among men' (32) or 'I speak wicked words from sword-like hatred' (30). The rationale seems to be twofold; on the one hand the beauty of Viṣṇu's statue in Araṅkam (16 to 21, resembling the Aāp) heightens the awareness of his own lowliness, but on the other hand it accentuates the overall importance of *grace*.

> They will not experience the fruits of their most extreme actions, though they be people with "clustering" sins desirous of murder, if they place you firmly into their minds. (40)

Almost magical features enter here, along with the tendency to minimize human effort for liberation and maximize the importance of grace.

> If all being on earth—who may not even know how to praise Viṣṇu—called out 'Araṅkam!', hell would grow like grass and vanish. (13)

This again preshadows the *prapatti* conception: a simple act of refuge and surrender is sufficient to secure Viṣṇu's grace.

Although a brahmin himself ('whose hands are beautiful with the flower-basket and the *tulsī* made into a garland' TPaḷ 10), Toṇṭaraṭippoṭi hints at a struggle between the Kṛṣṇa *bhaktas* and institutional brahminism.

> You (=Viṣṇu) manifestly like those 'servants' who express their love towards your feet, though they may be born as outcastes, more than the *Caturvedīs* who are strangers and without allegiance to your service.[10]
>
> You have said: 'O *Caturvedīs!* If they are my servants, though belonging to a low family, you have to worship them!'[11]
>
> Though they may be brahmins (*antaṇar*) by caste—who are the foremost among those belonging to you—and may be reciting the whole of the four *Vedas* and the six *aṅgas*, if they despise those who belong to you, in a moment they become like outcastes![12]

Although the brahmin *varṇa* is principally accepted as foremost, to 'belong to Viṣṇu', to be his *bhakta*, is the higher claim. We

[10] 39: *aṭimaiyiṟ kuṭimaiy illā ayal catuppētimāril kuṭimaiyil kaṭaimai ppaṭṭa kukkaril piṟappar-ēlum . . . kaḷaṟk' aṉpu ceyyum aṭiyaraiy ukatti pōlum.*

[11] 42: *Catuppētimārkaḷ! iḻi kulatt' avarkaḷ-ēlum emm aṭiyārkaḷ ākil toḻuminīr.*

[12] 43: *Ōr aṅkam āṟum vētam ōr nāṉkum ōti ttamarkaḷil talaivar āyacātiy antaṇarkaḷ-ēlum numarkaḷai ppaḻippar ākil noṭippat ōr aḷavil āṅkē avarkaḷ tām pulaiyar pōlum.* Compare TVM III, 7, 9.

may see in these remarks the expression of the solidarity of the *bhakta* community against the *caturvedī* establishment, something that the allusions to '*muni-vāhana*' also indicate.

With this Āḻvār we again encounter what I have called intervening structures. His very name indicates this: 'the dust of/at the feet of the "servants"'.[13] Note also how Araṅkam has taken the position of Viṣṇu in the economy of grace (stanza 13 quoted above).

We may conveniently turn now to Madhurakavi, who illustrates another form of 'intervening structure'.

4.373 *The Kaṇṇi nuṇ ciṟu ttāmpu*

His *Kaṇṇi nuṇ ciṟu ttāmpu* (**Knct**) is modelled on the conventional 'temple poem' (particularly in TVM). But instead of the usual pattern x (name of Kṛṣṇa) of y (name of temple), the free refrain has always 'Nampi (master) of Kurukūr' who is none other than Nammāḻvār (in 4 he is actually mentioned by name, Caṭakōpaṉ). This is the tenor of the song: for Madhurakavi, Nammāḻvār is like a god; the *antâti* also formally imitates that Āḻvār's *tiruvāymoḻis*. Except for Āṇṭāḷ's references to Viṭṭucittaṉ, this is the only cross-reference by name in the *Prabandham*. That Nammāḻvār appears as if deified speaks in favour of a late date for the poem, which seems to preshadow later *stotras* in praise of the Āḻvārs and Ācāryas.[14] At the same time, there is no statement that Nammāḻvār was Madhurakavi's direct *guru*, as some hagiographical works say, and for all we know those other texts that have Nāthamuni obtain the TVM from Madhurakavi personally may be right. However this may be, the type of bhakti expressed here is nothing but a specialized form of 'reverence to the ideal *bhaktas*' which we have found in other Āḻvārs (Parakālaṉ and Kulacēkaraṉ).

One of the key themes of the song is the 'singing of Nammāḻvār's songs'. 'I obtain bliss through the exercise of my tongue. I roam about, singing the sweet music of his songs.'[15] 'I shall recite, for

[13] In PāḷTM II, 3 and 10 we find the very similar *toṇṭar aṭi ccēṟu eṉ cennikk' aṇivaṉ* 'I shall place as ornament on my forehead the earth of the "servants'" feet.'

[14] The earliest example (apart from the *taṉiyaṉ* stanzas) is the *iRāmānujanūṟrantâti* added to the *Prabandham* (see above 4.21, note 9). On the Knct see further Hardy, 1978, section 2.13.

[15] 2: *nāviṉāl navirṟu iṉpam eytiṉēṉ; . . . pāviṉ iṉṉ icai pāṭi ttirivaṉē.*

all quarters to learn, the poems written in Tamil by Caṭakōpaṉ.' This confirms what has been said about the emotional function of Nammāḷvār's songs.[17] Then there is the idea that Nammāḷvār's songs are a Tamil rendering of the *Vedas*: 'He expounded the meaning of those *Vedas difficult to understand*...'[18] 'He sang and firmly fixed in my heart the inner meaning of the *Vedas* of the exalted brahmins.'[19] This claim could not but annoy the orthodox: a *śūdra* rendering the *Vedas* in a *śūdra* language. . . ![20] It is not surprising to hear the Āḻvār say: 'since those lords of the four *Vedas* regard [me] as vile, Caṭakōpaṉ is my lord.'[21] Thus as in the TMāl and in the tradition about Tiruppāṇ, the basic struggle is between the Kṛṣṇa-*bhakta* community with their *Tamil Veda* and orthodox vedic brahminism.

4.374 *The Tiruccantaviruttam*

This last point allows us to turn now to the *Tiruccantaviruttam*[22] **(TCV)** which abounds in references to the *Vedas* and brahmins. It is the only work in the *Prabandham* with a systematic arrangement according to theological categories: Viṣṇu/Kṛṣṇa in his own nature (theology) 1-4, as creator etc. 5-6, superior to other gods 7-9, transcends everything 10-15, revelation and manifestations 16-47 (Kṛṣṇa 33-43), temples 48-65, etc. The work contains many of the features typical of Viśiṣṭâdvaita *in nucleo:* Vedism, *yoga*, the *mantra* 'Oṃ namo Nārāyaṇāya', and the 'surrender' of *prapatti*. The

[16] 7: *eṉ ṭicaiyum aṟiya iyam pukēṉ/oṉ ṭamiḻ cCaṭakōpaṉ aruḷaiyē.*

[17] See pp. 328f,366-9

[18] 8: *aruḷiṉāṉ avv-aru maṟaiyiṉ poruḷ.*

[19] 9: *mikka vētiyar Vētattiṉ uṭ poruḷ niṟka ppāṭi^{y} eṉ ṉeñc'uḷ niṟuttiṉāṉ.* While in 8 we have *maṟai,* we have here *vētam;* I do not think that the older distinction between the words is still maintained here.

[20] On the development of the concept of the 'Tamil Veda' by the *śūdra* Nammāḷvār see Hardy, 1978.

[21] 4: *nāṉmaṟaiy āḷarkaḷ puṉmaiy āka kkarutuvar ātaliṉ . . . Caṭakōpaṉ eṉ nam-piyē.* These *nāl maṟai āḷar are the Caturvedīs* of TMāl 39 and 42.

[22] On the problem of authorship of this work see above p. 256, note 56; I suggest separating the *Nāṉmukaṉ-Tiruvantâti* and the TCV as works by two different authors, one belonging to the Early Āḻvārs, and the other to the 9th century or so. Zvelebil (1974, p. 101) writes: '[The author of TCV] (AD 850) is very important . . . since he seems to have been the one who has in a massive way introduced the *cantam* . . . into Tamil poetry, and thus started a minor prosodic revolution.' Compare Zvelebil, p. 109 on this Sanskritic type of prosody. I have found only PTM I, 6 as a further example of the *canta-viruttam* in the *Prabandham*.

Vedas are referred to in 14 stanzas (twice the *ṛc* and once the *sāma*),[23] we hear of sacrifices accompanied by chant (9.34), and at least three times (52.56.58) brahmins are mentioned. *Yoga (yōku* 23.27 *yōkam* 63) appears as an important spiritual exercise (23. 27. 63. 76.77), which is probably also meant by the frequent 'meditating, thinking'. Significantly, when once or twice something like a vague emotionalism appears, it is through *yoga* that it is achieved:

> Who could see Him, unless by a singular ever-increasing love: blocking the passage of the vile senses and placing a wax seal upon them, and opening up a passage for the true [or: *sattva*] sense-object, kindling the fine lamp of knowledge, becoming weak in the bones, melting away in the heart, and turning ripe and soft in the soul?[24]

Negating the senses is thus the primary condition for an internal emotional relish; thus the author says:

> I have brought under control the five senses so difficult to *harness* and destroyed those fetters that are passion.[25]

With quasi-Jain disgust: 'to destroy the disease of the body which is the abode of phlegm. . .'[26] The *tirumantram* is mentioned twice (77f); in 77 it is connected with *yoga*: 'who are seated in worship with the eight divisions (= *aṣṭâṅgayoga*) and recite the eight syllables of His name (= *aṣṭâkṣaramantra*)' and in 78 it is equated with the Vedic chant. A whole section (88-98) deals with humble faith and surrender, and in 92 reference is made to what will be the *locus classicus* for *prapatti* with the Ācāryas: 'Please tell me who have come to you for refuge: "Do not fear!"'[27]

[23] 9, 15, 19, 23, (27), 34, 56, 72, 78, 87, 117; *ṛc*(= *irukku*): 103, 109; *cāmavēta*: 14. But we hear of no struggle or conflict here with established brahminism.

[24] 76: *puṉ pula vaḻiy aṭaittu, arakk' ilacciṉai ceytu, naṉ pula vaḻi tiṟantu, ñāṉa nar cuṭar koḷḷi, enpil eḷki, neñc' uruki, uḷ kaṉint', eḻuntat' ōr anpiṯ aṉṟi . . . yāvar kāṇa vallarē.* For *ñāṉa cuṭar* see p. 294, for a similar sequence of stages in bhakti (but including worship and praise) see 294f. The whole stanza is full of resonances of the *Early Antâtis*.

[25] 95: *aṭakk' arum pulaṉkaḷ aint' aṭakki, ācaiy ām avai tuṭakk' uṟuttu.* Compare 98: *aim pulaṉkaḷ ācaiyum tuṟantu* 'having overcome the 5 senses [and] passion [caused by them]'.

[26] 97: *aiy il āyav ākkai nōy aṟuttu.* 'Disease of the body' means 'the disease which is the body'.

[27] 92: *niṉ taṉakku* aṭaikkalam *pukuntav eṉṉai 'añcal' eṉṉa vēṇṭumē.* In the *Gītā*, XVIII, 66, we read: *mām ekaṃ śaraṇaṃ vraja . . . mā śucaḥ*! 'Come to me

I think this brief summary illustrates very clearly that by now we are dealing with a highly Sanskritized and Brahminized form of Āḻvār bhakti. It is as if the whole development had turned back to its beginnings (note the many similarities and allusions to the Early Āḻvārs), but in fact we are here at the initial phase of *Viśiṣṭâdvaita*. However, there seem to be some traces in the TCV of imagery and ideas typical of *advaita* —the great anathema of *Viśiṣṭâdvaita*. In 10 we may have not more than an innocent borrowing of imagery:

> The cosmic order by which [all] moving and unmoving things arise and dissolve back into you and come to rest in you, [itself] exists in you—similar to the ocean's nature by which it—white with its waves that billow and rise up in it—billows and rises and subsists in itself.[28]

Is a 'non-duality' (*advaita*) of soul/matter and *Īśvara*, parallel to that of ocean and waves, suggested here? Another stanza has definitely created problems for the Śrīvaiṣṇava commentators:

> He has come close to me; he has made his own eternal light *unite in himself who is in me*; thus my soul has obtained the everlasting bliss of *mokṣa* (*vīṭu*).[29]

Vīrarāghavâcāriyar translates the phrase in italics as 'unite in my heart',[30] while Aṇṇaṅkarâcāriyar alters the word-order and says: 'unite in me who am in Him'.[31] I think the *advaita* flavour of the original as translated here is fairly pronounced.

We may provisionally conclude the present chapter by saying that something like a Śrīraṅgam milieu seems to be emerging. This milieu witnessed an initial struggle between the *bhakta* community, with its 'Tamil-Veda' and its own interpretation of the caste

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alone for refuge, do not worry!' *Aṭaikkalam* and *śaraṇâgati* will be synonyms of *prapatti*.

[28] *Tann uḷē tiraitt' eḷun taraṅka veṇ . . . kaṭal tann uḷē tiraitt' eḷuntu aṭaṅkukinra taṉmai pōl ninn uḷē piṟant' iṟantu nirpavum tiripavum ninn uḷēy aṭaṅkukinra nīrmai niṉ kaṇ inratē.*

[29] 120: *ennai . . . vantu . . . naṇṇiy ennil āya tann uḷē mayakkiṉāṉ taṉ mannu cōti; ātaḷāl enn āvi tāṉ . . . arātav inpa vīṭu perratē.*

[30] By taking 'eṉ nilāya' ('that which pervades me') = heart + tannuḷ (locative).

[31] By changing it into 'tannil āya ennuḷ'; he paraphrases: *tannōṭu avinā-pūtam āna ennuḷḷē* 'in me who am necessarily and intrinsically connected with him'.

structure (TMāl 43; Knct 4), and the orthodox brahmin (*Caturvedī*) establishment,[32] but then (if the TCV can be taken as later evidence) a full fusion of brahmin Upaniṣadic ideas with bhakti. The older eroticism (whether in poetry, myth or mysticism) is abandoned; ecstasy, when found,—and that is very rarely, except for the Aāp—is based on *yoga;* and aestheticism is absent. One important question arises here, which I shall investigate in 5.00: is this Araṅkam milieu the exclusive representative of the late phase of the Āḻvār movement, and was the movement itself so totally absorbed into Śrīvaiṣṇavism as the latter claims? But before we can turn to these problems, we have to look back at the material presented so far and evaluate some of its important features systematically.

4.4 The mysticism of separation of the Āḻvārs

Let my fine breasts become redolent with the *mullai* flowers on your chest, give me to drink the nectar of your mouth![1]

4.41 *Introduction*

These two lines exemplify most of the main features of Ālvār religion. The I speaking here happens to be a *gopī*, but it could equally well be the girl or the mystic—compare particularly Āṇṭāḷ's poems. We can thus say that this form of religion orientates itself according to three interconnected (and yet autonomous) sets of symbols: those of myth, of love-poetry (viz. the *akattiṇai*), and of self-awareness.[2] The common content of all three sets, the fundamental situation in which this orientation takes place, is 'separation'. The I expresses a longing, an unfulfilled desire, which for instance

[32] In the (3000) *Guruparamparāprabhāvam* (pp. 51f) we read the following story (*katai*): 'Formerly, Tirumaṅkai-Āḻvār had requested Periya-Perumāḷ (= Viṣṇu in Araṅkam) and he had this (Namm-) Āḻvār's [vigraha] brought to the holy temple of Tiruvaraṅkam, and he had the TVM recited there along with the *Vedas*. . . But although Periya-Perumāḷ had given the order that every year (the recitation) should take place, after a few years . . . the Āḻvār [vigraha] did not come [= was not brought?] any more to the Temple (= Araṅkam).' We can perhaps link this with Madhurakavi's and Toṇṭaraṭippoṭi's complaints about a brahmin opposition.

[1] TVM IX, 9, 5.

[2] For an explanation of 'symbols of self-awareness' see p. 427.

in the *akattiṇai* symbolism is suggested by the *mullai* flower. Although this situation of separation is accepted as given and as outside the I's control, certain specific factors which the I takes for granted can be regarded as responsible for the separation. From the very nature of the self-awareness expressed, 'separation' follows logically and necessarily: however symbolic or metaphorical 'breasts' or 'nectar of your mouth' may be, they fundamentally denotate an awareness which stubbornly defends the validity of the body, the senses, and the emotions in the religious context against the normative claim that solely the mind can play a positive rôle.[3] The desire expressed by the I concerns aspects of the you which would by their nature justify the self-awareness of the I: Kṛṣṇa the you is the god of love and beauty who revealed precisely these aspects to the *gopīs* and similarly expresses them in the poetic landscape. But at the same time, both with respect to the empirical situation of the I and to other aspects of the you's nature, the meeting between the I and you cannot take place. Empirically no mystic has obtained physical union with Kṛṣṇa on earth, and theologically Kṛṣṇa's nature as the Absolute precludes such a union with a contingent being. Thus the I and you find themselves 'separated', which in theological terms (according to Nammāḻvār) means that they meet in a manner which does not eliminate the fundamental difference and distance between them. However, this 'clasping His feet as if not having come close to them'[4] is not total distance and separation for another reason also, viz. that Kṛṣṇa's beauty (and his nature in general) 'incarnates' itself in a variety of concrete forms available to the I's senses and emotions: in the temple *vigrahas*, and similarly in poetry and in the heart. These

[3] Selective as it has to be, since it concentrates on emotionalism, our present study does not allow as to investigate the Āḻvārs' theological reflections on the validity of mental reflection on Kṛṣṇa. But I may suggest that for instance Nammāḻvār conceived of mental comprehension of the Absolute in terms similar to the emotional comprehension of Tirumāl, viz. in terms of symbolic structures which, due to the *māyā* they contain, allow the human mind and intellect to gain an understanding of Kṛṣṇa, and at the same time prevent it. His first *tiruvāymoḻi* may illustrate this: 'O my mind! Reach out for Him who in His grace grants clarity of mind, . . . who transcends all heights of transcendence, . . . and worship Him!' 'He cannot be comprehended by the insight of the mind, though it may reach out to great heights and expands itself. . He is not an object the senses would comprehend. . . He is like this, . . . He is not like this.' (TVM I, 1, 1 and 2)

[4] TVM VII, 2, 10.

incarnations make it possible for the I to find quasi-fulfilment or quasi-union in terms of the premises it adheres to: 'to become redolent with His flowers' and 'to drink the nectar of His mouth'.

I have given an abstract picture which synthesizes features typical of many Āḻvārs, particularly the Major Āḻvārs. It is clear that with these saints emotional Kṛṣṇa bhakti has reached a first culmination, in which the many individual trends and developments analysed for the earlier period are brought together as an organic whole which covers the full range of my initial definition (see 1.2). Historically speaking, five different strands were woven together to constitute this whole.

(1) A fundamental conception of the 'ideal man', the *cāṉrōṉ*, the man of culture and wisdom, but also of flesh and blood; this anthropocentric and 'humanistic' conception remains intact during the centuries after the classical *caṅkam* period, to reassert itself in a somewhat different manner with the Tamil renaissance.

(2) An aesthetic sensibility, which through the poetic landscapes of *caṅkam* poetry achieved a harmony between human emotions and natural environment, employing the latter to 'visualize' and savour the former, and at the same time conditioning emotive responses and associations in relation to the phenomena found in these landscapes (in so far as they are *real*).

(3) Forms of folk religion and worship which know of ecstasy, emotional intensity and directly sensuous appeal; in a more sophisticated form, aspects of it are developed in the temple culture and in a Kṛṣṇaite folk milieu.

(4) Bhakti towards the absolute god Kṛṣṇa; while the *Paripāṭal* expresses it as humble service of an overpowering distant god, the Early Āḻvārs add to the intellectual *bhakti-yoga* a mystical drive towards union, in which the emotions play a valid rôle.

(5) The Vṛndāvana episodes in the life of the young Kṛṣṇa, with increasing emphasis on the *gopī* story.

But even this analysis into five strands is merely an abstraction, for already from their beginnings these strands are interrelated. Thus the love mysticism of the Early Āḻvārs was probably able to develop its emotive potential only because of the sensuous nature of temple worship; and the increasing emphasis on the *gopī* episodes may be explained by considering the Southern humanistic and erotic awareness (-1 and 2), which selected from the vast mythology of the *purāṇas* those myths which were most congenial to

its own character. Moreover, the development of these strands and their increasing integration has to be seen in relation to more general sociological and cultural developments in the South. In the pronounced 'humanism' of the Tamil renaissance (which certainly influenced the Major Āl̲vārs) we may recognize a reaction to the ideological pressures of Jainism and Buddhism; Murukan̲ religion could set certain models for, or at least preshadow, what Kṛṣṇaism fully achieved—an integration of the *akattiṇai* and bhakti; an increasing brahmin influence upon Southern culture and religion (documented already in the *Paripāṭal*, in the Early Āl̲vārs, and very accentuated towards the close of the Āl̲vār period) was presumably due to increasing brahmin immigration from the North; the conception of Māyōn̲ as the Absolute, which is directly responsible for the mysticism of separation, could only evolve in the context of a religious polarization which broke up the older *caṅkam* complementary structure of the various gods; the slow fading away of the *akattiṇai* ideology, which is reflected *inter alia* in the consolidation of a different *Weltanschauung* derived from mythical symbols (Periyâl̲vār), or in a different poetic style (NTM VII, PāṭTM II[5], PTMaṭ 1-24; TCV and PTM I,6[6]), must be regarded as a particular effect of a general cultural transformation taking place in the South under the massive impact of Sanskritic culture.

This abstract analysis of Āl̲vār bhakti in terms of major trends and developments ought to be differentiated further, since even the Āl̲vārs differ considerably among themselves in the character of their emotionalism. But I have already attempted, when summarizing the essentials of each Āl̲vār, to delineate similarities and differences, and thus it is not necessary to repeat this. Features like the relative autonomy of the girl symbolism, dialectic versus monolinear dynamism, relative preponderance of poetic or mythical symbols, changes in self-awareness, solutions to the tension created by the impossible desire of the mystics' I, have been discussed above. But it will be appropriate now to look at the picture we have obtained from different points of observation, and also to analyse certain points in a systematic manner not possible in the individual summaries. Although these various topics which will be discussed below appear in a somewhat disconnected manner (a systematic

[5] See p. 434 note 12.
[6] See p. 439, with note 22.

theology of Āḻvār bhakti is obviously out of the question here), we can nevertheless derive a coherent ordering principle from the observations made in the beginning. Thus I shall start with the I in relation to the you, Kṛṣṇa, which can be broken up into three separate topics: self-awareness, conceptions of Kṛṣṇa, and the mode in which both relate to each other. Secondly, I turn to the concrete forms, the intervening structures, in which the I meets the you. Finally, I shall analyse the social and cultural implications of Āḻvār bhakti—both the I and the intervening structures are intrinsically linked with society.

4.42 *The I in relation to the you, Kṛṣṇa*

Neither of the two elements of the relation can be taken for granted. Thus at least in early *caṅkam* religion, a 'you' fluctuates with an 'it': *muruku* is the older, abstract noun ('beauty, youth, vigour . . .') from which the personal noun Muruk'-aṉ is derived ('he who possesses beauty')[7]; *aṇaṅku* 'frenzy, possession' becomes only in Jain parlance a personalized conception ('celestial damsel; demoness of lust')[8]. Remnants of this fluctuation can be noticed even in the Āḻvārs: TVM IV, 4 (also V, 6)[9] plays with the two meanings of *māl*, 'Kṛṣṇa' and 'mental disturbance', and brings the old conception of 'possession' to bear upon the girl's mental state; TPā 4[10] links the fertility of the rain-clouds with Kṛṣṇa. However, for all practical purposes the you is for the Āḻvārs a masc. sg., the personal Absolute Kṛṣṇa.[11]

More complicated is the case of the I. Even in the hymns of the *Pari.* and in the stanzas of the *Kali.* and *Āycci*, we still find a 'we' praising and worshipping Māl. This changes only in Kāraikkāl Ammaiyār and the Early Āḻvārs, where an I, conscious of its individuality, emerges from the anonymity of *caṅkam* love, and the 'we' of *caṅkam* religious poetry.[12]

[7] See pp. 133f.
[8] See p. 132.
[9] See pp. 345-8.
[10] See p. 417.
[11] On the identity of Kṛṣṇa-Māyōṉ see 3.711 and 4.312.1.
[12] See pp. 147f. 276f.

4.421 *Self-awareness*

One of the fundamental premises of emotional bhakti is the manner in which the I is aware of itself. This awareness is obviously conditioned and transmitted by a given cultural tradition; the Āḻvārs are influenced by Tamil, and not Northern, culture, and we have frequently characterized Tamil awareness as anthropocentric, humanistic, down-to-earth, world-positive, etc. The concrete and sensuous form of temple religion reinforced this attitude. Although a different cultural tradition, viz. Sanskritic culture, begins to have its impact on the South with the Early Āḻvārs, these sages display an as yet unaltered self-awareness and in fact a positive attitude towards their psychosomatic being which has been boosted by integrating facets of Northern culture. In less abstract terms, this means that by realizing the full potential of bhakti for the body with its senses and limbs, and for the emotions, they can express a self-confidence, even exuberance, which for instance in the *Pari.* or Kāraikkāl Ammai is still absent or at least much more subdued. A stanza by Poykai may illustrate this attitude towards the full person involved in bhakti:

Love speaks to me: 'Go close to Him with the discus!'
The tongue says: 'Praise and extol His shoulders. . .!'
The eyes say: 'Gaze at Him who does not look at past deeds!'
The ears say: 'Listen to the praise of Him who is adorned with ornaments and necklaces [or: garlands]!'[13]

Performing these acts and taking in His splendour through the senses give rise to a loving desire and passion, which unlike worldly *kāma* can achieve complete fulfilment. Thus Pūtattu says:

Sweet, they say, is lust; even much sweeter than that, they say, is water,[14]
O my Father! But not craving for sweet lust and water, if one craves for your splendour even a little, one obtains security-and-happiness.[15]

[13] 1stAnt 72: *anp' āḻiyāṉaiy aṇuk ennum, nāv avaṉ raṉ . . . tōḷ paraviy ēṯṯ' ennum muṉp' ūḻi kāṇāṉai kkāṇ ennum kaṇ, cevi kēḷ ennum pūṇ āram pūṇṭāṉ pukaḻ.* Compare 1stAnt 11f.41. 63. 2ndAnt 32f.38.57 etc.

[14] Aṇṇa. interprets it as one of the elements, and thus suggestive of the sense-objects; Vīra. takes it as the basic sustenance of the body ('food and drink') in contrast to 'pleasure'.

[15] 2ndAnt 35: *iṉit' enpar kāmam, ataṉilum ārra/iṉit' enpar taṇṇīrum, entāy! — iṉit' enru/kāma ˘nīr vēḷātu niṉ perumai vēṭparēl/cēma ˘nīr ākum ciṟitu//* Compare 1stAnt 72, 2ndAnt 38.

The religious activity of the whole person produces a fulfilment and happiness which again involves the whole person:

My body, considering and resolving upon it, finds delight in the work of singing about the fiery discus and the conch, and of dancing.[16]

This self-awareness and exuberance is by no means naive, for it is the result of a struggle which during the previous centuries had filled Tamil culture with gloom and depression: the struggle with the Northern concepts of *saṃsāra*, *karma*, *puṇya*, and *pāpa*. Thus in the stanza translated above Kṛṣṇa is called 'he who does not look at past deeds'. In bhakti as the loving desire and worship of Kṛṣṇa, *saṃsāra* and *karma* are overcome. Pūtattu says: 'If I did not praise and worship your feet, all my many births would [turn into] a calamity for me.'[17] Pēy: 'This very day I have seen your feet, and I have destroyed seven[18] births!'[19] Finally Poykai:

They will not be beaten down by deeds (= *karma*), will not go to cruel hells, will not walk even to the smallest extent on an evil course, when they worship with their hands Him who is difficult to comprehend, is remote, is black with red eyes, and has a thousand names.[20]

Aware of being safe from *saṃsāra* and from all evil, these Early Āḻvārs can exclaim: 'Whatever could happen to me?!'[21] 'He united with me in my inside; is there any strength comparable to this?'[22] 'I have become replete: I have transcended earth and heaven!'[23] In this awareness, altogether novel and revolutionary statements can be made, statements which strike at the very root of normative ideology, viz. that bhakti transcends even the ideal of *mokṣa*:

16 2ndAnt 32: *makiḻntat' aḻal āḻi caṅkam avai pāṭiy āṭum tòḻil ākam cūḻntu tuṇintu.*

17 2ndAnt 37: *niṉ pātaṅkaḷ ētti ppaṇiyāvēl pal piṟappum ētaṅkaḷ ellām emakku.* Compare 42.

18 When occurring with 'births, genrations, etc.', 'seven' is idiomatic for 'all', or an infinite number.

19 3rdAnt 2: *inrē kaḻal kaṇṭēṉ, ēḻ piṟappum yāṉ aruttēṉ.*

20 1stAnt 65: *viṉaiyāl aṭar ppaṭār ven narakil cērār / tiṉaiyēṉum tī kkatikkaṭ cellār-niṉaitark' / ariyāṉai cēyāṉai āyiram pēr ceṅ kaṭ / kariyāṉai kkai toḻutakkāl.* Compare 41, 64.

21 1stAnt 88: *enṉ ākil ennēy eṉakku.*

22 4thAnt 82: *kalantāṉ enṉ uḷḷattu . . . nalan tāṉum īt' oppat' uṇṭē.*

23 4thAnt 95: *ānrēṉ kaṭa ṉāṭum maṇ ṇāṭuṅ kai vittu.*

'Grant me in your grace that I become a servant solely to your feet in all my [future] births, and [thus] live without any fear.'[24]

Such confidence is clearly motivated by the new (and Northern) conception of Kṛṣṇa's indwelling the heart, but I think it was due only to the other factors, Tamil anthropocentrism and sensuous worship, that this conception was channelled into such a positive attitude towards the empirical personality; in the Br/ViP version of the *gopī* episodes we have a typical example of a different direction: because Kṛṣṇa is inside the *ātman*, the mind must be freed from all sensuous and emotional disturbances.

In some sense this attitude of down-to-earth confidence remains typical also of later Āḻvārs. Nammāḻvār exclaims with a similar exuberance and confidence: 'Who is of greater fame than I' or 'I am great!'[25] and in a moment of mystic union he can lament that 'the mountains and the ocean . . . like grass have disappeared'.[26] Like Pēy-Āḻvār, he prefers earthly existence as a *bhakta*; only because the 'man of flesh and blood' remains accepted can we hear about the suffering of the girl or the *gopī* in separation.[27] His 'soft soul and body swell-and-rejoice' at the mere sight of a dark flower,[28] and he can relish the beauty of creation, because even Kṛṣṇa 'danced in the dust of the earth.'[29] Similarly in Tirumaṅkai-Āḻvār the awareness of a full human being with body, soul, and emotions is found,[30] underlying as in Nammāḻvār the emotions of the girl; moreover, in the dynamic drive typical of this saint, increasing intensity is reflected in increasingly physical and erotic language.[31] In spite of the stereotyped and metaphorical use of the *maṭal*, as an act of self-inflicted physical pain with the purpose of finding physical fulfilment,[32] it can well be related to the present context. Finally, the justification of *kāmam* expounded by the girl is inspired by the same down-to-earth, almost empirical/empiricist approach to religion.[33] In Periyâḻvār it is precisely this positive

[24] 3rdAnt 18: *iṇaiy aṭikkē ēḻ piṟappum āḷ āki aṅcāt' irukkav aruḷ.*
[25] See p. 311.
[26] See p. 314.
[27] See p. 370f.
[28] See p. 312.
[29] See p. 317.
[30] Compare p. 635f.
[31] See pp. 381f and 4.331.1.
[32] See 4.332.
[33] See pp. 389ff

attitude towards the body, *eros*, and life which adds a remarkable freshness and originality to the children's songs, and in fact prevents them from becoming sugary and sentimental.[34] In Aṇṭāḷ we reach the climax of a self-awareness orientated towards the concrete side of the personality; in fact I have suggested that the rationale underlying the NTM is that of the growing-up, of the psychological and physical development, of a young girl, and that the final stage these processes reach is an uninhibited desire for physical, sexual fulfilment.[35] Kulacēkaran's song VI is perhaps the most unabashedly physical *gopī* poem, while VII shows a deep sympathy for the earthly longing of Kṛṣṇa's real mother Devakī. In song IV he expresses his wish, not to find *mokṣa*, but to be born again and again in *saṃsāra* as a more perfect *bhakta*. Tiruppāṇ's poem, finally, is the epitome of sensuous relish of Kṛṣṇa's beauty physically manifested in the *vigraha*.

However, with Nammāḻvār a different type of self-awareness begins to make itself felt. The positive attitude towards man as a physical being, which we have traced so far, enters into a struggle between different facets of man's personality. Thus Nammāḻvār notices that the personality consists of a number of autonomous components and that the coordination of these toward the one aim of bhakti is difficult; we find a torn personality.[36] This tearing away from perfect bhakti by various components (often for example by the heart) is explained by Nammāḻvār in different ways, and it is now necessary to investigate the details of these explanations. Frequently in the previous pages the word 'sin' has been used. In terms of normative ideology (which uses the terms *puṇya* and *pāpa*), this could be misleading, for 'sin' according to common Christian understanding denotes both an offence against God for which man is personally responsible, and the inherited 'original sin'. But I believe that for Nammāḻvār (and other Āḻvārs too) 'sin' *is* applicable, with obvious modifications. On the one hand, the phraseology employed would indeed suggest the Sanskritic concepts *karma*, *pāpa*, etc.; the very frequent *viṉai* means 'deed' (thus~*karma*), and *pāvam* is a loan-word, < Skt. *pāpa*. Again,

[34] See in particular p. 407 with note 25.
[35] See pp. 425-8.
[36] See pp. 310f.

expressions like *tol viṉai*,[37] *ūḻ viṉai*[38]—both: 'ancient deeds'—and paraphrases like *mēlai ceyyum viṉai*[39] or *muṉ ceyta viṉai*[40] (both: 'deeds done in the past') would indicate a conception similar to *karma*. Finally, just as the Tamil *ē pāvamē*[41] refers to an unfortunate and regrettable ordinance of fate (in other words, something for which the person is not responsible), *pāviyēṉ/ °yēm*[42] 'I/we, unfortunate person/s' carries the same meaning, as perhaps also *tuyar*[43] 'miserable condition'. But on the other hand, a number of indications suggest that the concept of faults for which the actual person is responsible, is intermingled with the idea of *karma*. Thus we hear of *nāḻ*,[44] *piḻai* (and the verb *piḻaittal*)[45] 'fault, crime, offence', and of *tī pāla*[46] 'of a wicked character, disposition, nature'. This ambivalence is confirmed when we look at the contexts of these phrases. The 'deeds' prevent the sight of Kṛṣṇa,[47] prevent him from residing in the heart,[48] and prevent people from praising him.[49] But at the same time it is Kṛṣṇa who provides a means with which to do away with these deeds,[50] who 'destroys the ancient deeds upon us',[51] just as by the act of praising Kṛṣṇa the 'deeds' are destroyed or driven away.[52] Thus people are criticized for not praising him,[53] the girl constantly blames her 'deeds' and her 'faults' for being the cause of Kṛṣṇa's absence,[54] and the I scolds the heart for not co-operating, so that 'it will sink deeper into the

[37] PTAnt 34.
[38] Ibid., 79.
[39] Ibid., 44.
[40] TVM I, 4, 2.
[41] See p. 314.
[42] PTAnt 8.73; TVM V, 4, 2.
[43] PTAnt 54, 65.
[44] Ibid., 10.
[45] TVM I, 4, 7 and 6.
[46] TVM V, 4, 7.
[47] PTAnt 8.
[48] Ibid., 30.
[49] Ibid., 44, 82. Compare TVM I, 4, 2.
[50] PTAnt 31, 87; compare 57.
[51] PTAnt 34: *empāl tol viṉai kaṭiyum*.
[52] Ibid., 59, 65, 76, 86.
[53] E.g., ibid., 44.
[54] This is very pronounced in the two songs TVM I, 4 and V, 4, in which the girl relates her miserable condition, her separation, time and again to her 'deeds', her faults, her shortcomings.

wicked "deeds"'.[55] The issue is further complicated, because Kṛṣṇa's potential removal of 'deeds' is something that is left to his own free will. 'Māl has not given me his grace because he thought of my faults';[56] 'Is it to me the sinner alone that he does not extend his mercy?'[57]

We may thus conclude that Nammāḻvār has adopted the Northern conception of *karma*, deeds done in previous lives which condition the present one (sometimes in such an inexplicable manner that their operation approximates to fate), and uses the concept to explain the shortcomings of his religious endeavour; but since he is aware of Kṛṣṇa as the remover of *karma*, another concept—that of personal responsibility and fault—enters: the torn personality struggles precisely with the short-comings and lack of coordination of its components. The struggle is further intensified by the awareness that Kṛṣṇa's unpredictable nature, his *māyam*, does not assist in the struggle with his grace in any automatic manner.

This is a new facet of self-awareness which will continue in the following Āḻvārs; the particularly pronounced awareness of 'sin' of Toṇṭar° may suffice as illustration:

> I have no purity in my mind. There is no sweet word in my mouth. I say again and again wicked things, appearing full of malice, out of hatred which is like a sword. Say, what will be my course herafter?[58]

Thus in this awareness of personal guilt and faults the older exuberant self-awareness was considerably modified, and we may regard this new combined awareness as the psychological background to the mysticism of separation.

4.422 *Conception of Kṛṣṇa*

From the very beginning of Tamil culture, the divine could be visualized within the confines of phenomenal existence, and, moreover, as love and beauty. The renaissance works, too, illustrate such an attitude towards Māyōṉ; it is perhaps the most typical expression of Tamil awareness of the divine when in *Kali*. 103,

[55] PTAnt 32: *tī viṉaikkē tāḻv' uṟuvār.*

[56] TVM I, 4, 7: *eṉ piḻaiyē niṉaint' aruḷi aruḷāta Māl.*

[57] Ibid., 5: *viṉaiyēṟkēyō nalkattāṉ ākātu.*

[58] TMāl 30: *maṉattil ōr tūymaiy illai, vāyil ōr iṉ col illai/ciṉattiṉāl ceṟṟām nōkki ttī viḷi-viḷivaṉ vāḷ ā/. . . eṉakk' iṉi kkatiy eṉ collāy.*

51-5[59] a girl, watching a bullfight and a boy's marvellous performance, spontaneously says: 'Such a person is perhaps Māyōṉ' —the girl takes it for granted that Kṛṣṇa may manifest himself in this event. Equally spontaneously, the *āycciyar* of the epic, noticing the bad omens, take on the rôles of Kṛṣṇa and Piṉṉai and enact his bullfight and *kuravai*.[60] Even in the temple milieu, this attitude manifests itself in phrases like 'we touch His feet with our heads',[61] or in the idea of Māl residing in Tirumāliruñcōlai[62] —actions and conceptions which blur any distinction between transcendence and incarnation. This extends to the Early Āḻvārs, where we find a rather robust 'sticking to the facts'; Poykai's second stanza illustrates this with marvellous conciseness:

> I do not understand a thing about when the ocean was churned. . . [But what I know is:] *that* is the ocean . . . where you recline, *this* the earth you created. . .[63]

Thus religious awareness, concentrating on the concrete, spontaneously chooses Kṛṣṇa's concrete aspect: his beauty.

> Isn't His beauty—He with the discus—the colour of the ocean's water? Isn't His beauty His stepping across the universe?[64]

All this is in harmony with the earlier stages of self-awareness outlined above: the down-to-earth acceptance of the physical human being agrees with the awareness of the divine as beauty manifested in empirical reality.

However, the Early Āḻvārs and the *Paripāṭal* demonstrate the impact of an altogether different awareness of the divine (doubtlessly derived from Northern religion), viz. Māl as the Absolute. This means that the same Māyōṉ had to be conceived of as beyond conception and perception. Defined as the Absolute, he has to be 'remote',[65] 'impossible to see' or 'understand'.[66] Thus Poykai

[59] See p. 190.

[60] See pp.172-4

[61] *Pari.* II, 72 (pp. 211f)

[62] See p. 207.

[63] 1stAnt 2: *eṉṟu kaṭal kaṭaintatu . . . oṉṟum ataṉaiy uṇarēṉ nāṉ . . . atu . . . kaṇ paṭuttav āḻi, itu nī . . . paṭaitt' . . . pār.*

[64] 3rdAnt 6: *aḻak' aṉṟēy āḻiyāṟku āḻi nīr vaṇṇam, aḻak' aṉṟēy aṇṭam kaṭattal.* Compare 1stAnt 85; 3rdAnt 5.7.9.85; etc.

[65] 1stAnt 65: *cēyāṉ.*

[66] See 1stAnt 65, 68; 2ndAnt 50; 3rdAnt 7.82f; 4thAnt 3.5.

speaks of the 'confusing mystery.'[67] Any standard of comparison is missing, and He is similar solely to Himself;[68] thus the I can experience Him only as paradox and in dialectics: 'He is both justice and evil',[69] both 'grace and injury'.[70] Moreover, the greatest mystery is perhaps that Māyōṉ does appear to manifest Himself, in spite of His transcendental remoteness. With the Early Āḻvārs this whole complex is given a key-term: *māyā* (*māyai*, *māl*),[71] and we have analysed how in Nammāḻvār *māyā*, contained in the symbols and symbolic structures, is experienced.[72] This remains a common theme with the later Āḻvārs, as we have seen above. In Periyâḻvār, one particular facet of Kṛṣṇa's *māyam* is extensively displayed: the young Kṛṣṇa's 'tricks and practical jokes'—a meaning of the word 'māyā' already found in Parakālaṉ.[73] Kulaśekhara perhaps places the greatest emphasis on Kṛṣṇa's *māyam* and the human surrender it demands.[74]

In some sense, *māyā* as Māyavaṉ's nature resembles the nature of the I; with Nammāḻvār it begins to be realized that the human person, or individual segments of it, is unpredictable too. According to the pole towards which the fluctuating self-awareness may turn, the knowledge of one's own sin can serve to rationalize Māyōṉ's withdrawal, while the down-to-earth self-confidence will impose another interpretation on the withdrawal by *māyam*: cruelty. We have a separate literary genre illustrating this facet of Kṛṣṇa-awareness, viz. the 'scolding songs';[75] in these songs the positive opinion of the I about itself judges Kṛṣṇa's unpredictability as lack of responsibility and faithfulness. The emotion of anger displayed here is the direct result of realizing His *māyā*. On the other hand, as has been pointed out above, Āḻvārs after Nammāḻvār oscillate between this form of self-awareness which can 'scold'

[67] 1stAnt 7: *mayakku*.

[68] See 2ndAnt 12; 3rdAnt 38; 4thAnt 4.

[69] 1stAnt 96: *aṟam pāvam eṉṟ' iraṇṭum āvāṉ*.

[70] 2ndAnt 24: *aruḷum kēṭum*.

[71] See p. 285 with note 20.

[72] See pp. 311f.346 etc.

[73] See p. 378 .

[74] See PāḷTM V and VI.

[75] Spoken by the girl or *gopī*: TVM VI, 2.8; PTM X, 7; PTMaṭ 68-78. NTM II; III; XI; XIII; PāḷTM VI; spoken by the mother: TVM II, 4; PTM X, 8.9; PâḻTM II, 7 etc. Expressed through nature TVM IX, 5 (partly also TVM VI, 8; NTM VII).

Kṛṣṇa and express anger and frustration, and a feeling of guilt and personal deficiency.

The area in which the I comes to know of Kṛṣṇa in an objective and external manner is myth, and that in a twofold way. Firstly, Kṛṣṇa's manifestations on earth, which myth records, represent the objective repertoire from which man derives his knowledge of Kṛṣṇa's nature; secondly, and more specifically, the mythical repertoire constitutes the basis for the Tamil acquaintance with Kṛṣṇa. In numerous places in the previous pages myth has been discussed,[76] and I have restricted the present discussion to two facets which deserve a few remarks. Instead of an analysis of Vaiṣṇava mythology known to the Āḻvārs—an analysis which would require the scope of a full monograph—I shall here only make some observations concerning the identity of Māyōṉ and the concentration on certain myths, viz. the erotic ones.

(1) '*Kṛṣṇa*' *within general Vaiṣṇava mythology* Restricting my observations to the Early Āḻvārs, and here again to somewhat selective material, it appears to me that the results we obtained from the *caṅkam* material[77] can be applied to the present sources without major modifications: the Early Āḻvārs drew a clear distinction between Vaiṣṇava myth, including the various stories told about the *avatāras*, and Māyōṉ/Kṛṣṇa.

The commonest way of referring to any specific aspect of Viṣṇu/Kṛṣṇa is by *āy* 'becoming, being'; for special emphasis *uru* 'form' (or various derivatives), may be used; see the following Table XXIII on p. 456.

While the first five items are *avatāras* according to the conventional schema, the last one is not, and would relate to the eternal Viṣṇu as the destroyer and absorber of the cosmos.[78] Again, it is interesting to note that even Rāma requires the qualifier *āy*. Now turning to Kṛṣṇa, we do find the same *āy*; *piḷḷai āy* (he broke the cart),[79] *kōvalaṉ āy* (he grazed the cows).[80] But we may notice a) that the same *piḷḷai āy* is used for Viṣṇu the absorber of the universe, and b) that the *āy* qualifies not Kṛṣṇa as such, but *as a baby* and *as a young cowherd*. Moreover, from other contexts it appears that the *āy* even in these cases is optional: 'the boy who tore the horse's

[76] See pp. 180–3. 284–8. 354–60. 428 etc.
[77] See pp. 220f
[78] Compare p. 285
[79] 2ndAnt 10.
[80] 3rdAnt 42.

mouth apart is inside Araṅkam',[81] 'the young cowherd who broke the *kuruntu* tree has taken Vēṅkaṭam as his abode'.[82] In these examples, the god of the temple is specified by mythical paraphrases,[83] but I consider it significant that the subject of the paraphrase, Kṛṣṇa/Māyōn, is not specified further by relating it through *āy, uru āy,* etc., with the myth.

Very frequently mythical references have special temporal qualifiers, e.g., *anṟu* 'that day', *muṉ* 'formerly', *paṇṭu* 'in the past': 'that is the ocean where you sleep, after blocking it[84] that day',[85]

TABLE XXIII

Fish:	*mīṉ āy*[86]	
Boar:	*kēḻal āy,*[87] *ēn āy*[88]	*ēṉatt' ur' āy,*[89] *Varākatt' uruvaṉ*[90]
Nṛsiṃha:	*kōḷ ariy āy*[91]	*ari uruvaṉ,*[92] *ari uruvum āki*[93]
Vāmana:	*Vāmanaṉ āy*[94]	*kuṟaḷ uru āy*[95]
Rāma:	*iRāmaṉ āy*[96]	
Viṣṇu as child at the time of *pralaya*:	*pālakaṉ*[97]—*kuḻavi*[98] —*piḷḷai*[y] *āy*[99]	*pālaṉ taṉatu uru āy*[100]

[81] 2ndAnt 28: *mā vāy piḷanta makan . . .Araṅkatt uḷḷāṉ.*
[82] 3rdAnt 32: *kurunt ocitta kōpālakan . . . Vēṅkaṭamum . . itam āka koṇṭāṉ.*
[83] See p. 273
[84] This refers to Rāma's causeway, built to go to Laṅkā.
[85] 1stAnt 2: *atu anṟu nī aṭaittu . . . kaṇ paṭutta āḻi.*
[86] 4thAnt 22.
[87] 1stAnt 25; 3rd 54.
[88] 4thAnt 70.
[89] 1stAnt 91.
[90] 2ndAnt 31.
[91] 2ndAnt 18: 'murderous lion'.
[92] 2ndAnt 47; 4th 22.
[93] 3rdAnt 42.
[94] 3rdAnt 18.
[95] 2ndAnt 18: 'assuming a dwarfish form'.
[96] 3rdAnt 52.
[97] 3rdAnt 33.
[98] 3rdAnt 53; 4th 22.
[99] 3rdAnt 19.
[100] 1stAnt 69.

'formerly devouring the cosmos, then appropriating it',[101] 'the devouring of the cosmos across which He one day [in former times] had stepped'.[102] However, I have been unable to discover any coherent temporal patterns of 'eternal' events and manifestations in space and time, and the latter's sequence. On the other hand, I have found a number of indications of a different pattern.

muṉ oru nāḷ maṇ aḷantāṉ eṉ neñcam mēyāṉ: 'who one day in former times measured the earth, has my heart as his body/abode'.[103]
paṇṭu nāk' aṇai neṭiya Mārku iṉru ellām iṭam āvatu eṉ neñcam: 'From to-day for all the future my heart has become the residence of exalted Māl, who in the past [slept on] the serpent as His couch'.[104]

The interesting feature here is that the seemingly temporal qualifiers *muṉ oru nāḷ* and *paṇṭu* in fact function as contrastive particles, by which facts directly relevant to the I ('Kṛṣṇa dwells in my heart') are set in contrast to what I have above styled the objective repertoire of myths, by means of which the South came to know of Kṛṣṇa. Indirectly, this applies also to the contrast between myth and Kṛṣṇa's presence in the temple.[105] In both cases the 'objective' (which also means here the Northern) is set in relation to the concrete, personal.

(2) *Erotic mythology* While we found certain indications that Viṣṇu and Kṛṣṇa are not differentiated in the *Āḻvārs*' awareness, and while it appeared possible to detect a certain phraseological differentiation between objective and personally relevant facts, when we turn to the actual myths on which the later Āḻvārs concentrate we reach firm grounds for the assumption that when the Tamil South came to be acquainted with Kṛṣṇa mythology it made a very definite selection in accordance with the premises of its peculiar awareness.

It is in Nammāḻvār that we first find mythical episodes constituting the plot level of a song; thus an opposition to mythical references typical of the Early Āḻvārs (and once again, of the Minor Āḻvārs) evolves. The characteristic feature of these plot-level mythical poems is that they almost exclusively concern

101 3rdAnt 20: *muṉ ulakam uṇṭu . . . kōṭal.*
102 2ndAnt 18: *oru nāḷ tāṉ kaṭanta ulakē uṇṭatum.*
103 4thAnt 3.
104 4thAnt 66.
105 For examples see above, with notes 96f.

Kṛṣṇa and his Vṛndāvana adventures, and that among these the affairs with the *gopīs* constitute the majority. The following table XXIV summarizes these various erotic episodes.

TABLE XXIV

(1) Kṛṣṇa's mischief with the girls and women in general:
PTM X, 7 PâḻTM II, 7.8.10; III, 1

(2) He spoils the girls' game *cirril*:
TVM VI, 2, 9 NTM II PâḻTM II, 8̄, 3. → *Kali*. 51

(3) The *gopīs* scold him for disturbing their playing:
TVM VI, 2

(4) He steals the clothes and climbs on a *kuruntu* tree:
PTM X, 7, 11 NTM III. → *Aycci*. 8ĵc, ?*Akan*. 59

(5) The girls play the game *kūṭal*:
NTM IV

(6) The *gopīs* feel lonely, and worry about what might happen to him, when he has gone to graze the cows in the forest:
TVM X, 3 (Yaśodā: PâḻTM III, 2.3)

But when Kṛṣṇa returns in the evening: → *Aycci*. 8ĵa

(7) he is welcomed by the *gopīs*
PâḻTM III, 4 (Yaśodā: ibid. 3)

(8) he is playing the flute:
PâḻTM III, 6 TVM IX, 9, 9

(9) but one *gopī* feels left out:
TMV IX, 9

(10) Kṛṣṇa makes love to a *gopī*:
PTM X, 7, 1 PāḼTM VI (compare TVM VIII, 9)

(11) The *gopīs* scold Kṛṣṇa for his unfaithfulness:
PTM X, 8 PāḼTM VI (also TVM IX, 9) (comp. TVM VI, 6)

(12) A mother is worried about her daughter's infatuation:
PâḻTM III, 7 (compare TVM IV, 4)

(13) Kṛṣṇa has eloped with a *gopī*:
PâḻTM III, 8 (compare TVM VI, 7 and PTM III, 7)

The first point to notice is that in a number of cases (10, 11, 12, 13) the mythical songs have parallels among girl poems of Nammāḻvār, and I would not consider it improbable that in conformity

with the overall trend towards mythical awareness[106] later Āḻvārs were influenced by these girl poems and gave them a mythical setting. Secondly, in three further cases (2,4,7/8) the *caṅkam corpus* appears to contain the models from which inspiration is derived; moreover, I have pointed out that the three *gopī* poems of Nammāḻvār (2/3,6,9) are very closely modelled on *akattiṇai* conventions.[107] Thus we may conclude initially that the *caṅkam* material (both Kṛṣṇaite and *akattiṇai*) can be considered to be a major background area for Kṛṣṇa mythology in the Āḻvārs, and Nammāḻvār's songs (both of the girl and the *gopī*) as a major point of departure for later Āḻvārs. But once this situation has been stated, another becomes manifest: Nammālvār and the later Āḻvārs have *excluded* the major Kṛṣṇaite myths which seem typical of the Kṛṣṇaite folk culture documented in the works of the Tamil renaissance: the bullfight, Piṉṉai, the *kuravai*. But before continuing with this point, we may turn to a third feature of Table XXIV. Given the previous observations about the *caṅkam* background of the mythical poems, and the internal transformation of girl into *gopī* poems, we require no more than the Hv version of the *gopī* episode to explain the full picture found in the Table. Of particular interest is item (13), which in Periyâḻvār concludes the cycle: final *viraha* (which, we remember, was left unexplored in the Hv) appears here in the form of an elopement, and that almost certainly derived from two girl poems. This strongly argues against any influence on the Āḻvārs of the Br/ViP version and we must assume an *independent development* of the separation *motif* in the *Prabandham*. Moreover, none of the myths excluded by the Āḻvārs (bull-fight, etc.) are found in the Hv (while the Br/ViP *rāsa* would, I presume, have been related to the *kuravai*, if it had been known), and we might here have an explanation of why they were excluded: the Hv—as 'revelation'—had nothing to say about them; but almost certainly this explanation must be complemented by another: some social distinction must have been at work, whether this expressed itself in the rejection of folk myths for which the Sanskrit 'authority' (the Hv) offered no justification, or whether it was the dislike of the sophisticated Tamil *literati* for *kaikkiḷai*

106 See, for example, p. 445 above.

107 See above pp. 357f.

'vulgar love' (as which the bullfight could be classified[108]), or whether it was due to the social distance of an elitist like Nammāḻvār from such folk culture.

However, what is more important in the context of our study is the remarkable fact that the themes of those rather disconnected and certainly very marginal twenty *ślokas* of the Hv (63, 15-35) were explored and elaborated upon in more than two hundred stanzas by the Major Āḻvārs, and that these themes constitute Kṛṣṇa mythology *par excellence*, all other myths of Kṛṣṇa (and the *avatāras*) being relegated to a marginal position. This by itself indicates a fundamental difference from the approach of the Br/ViP version, and it is not surprising that the whole ideology underlying the treatment of the *gopī* episodes by the Āḻvārs also fundamentally differs from that of the Br/ViP version and resembles, as we shall presently see, that of the Hv.

4.423 *The meeting of the I and the you*

In the previous pages we have already taken into account that the I and Kṛṣṇa are interrelated: the awareness of sin arises from a particular awareness of Kṛṣṇa, and the concentration on the *gopī* episodes as *par excellence* manifestations of the Absolute's nature has its causes in a typical form of self-awareness. Thus we need not repeat here these types of interrelation; instead I shall look at the more fundamental modes in which the I finds itself meeting Kṛṣṇa. The major difficulty which we face here is that various models have intrinsically mingled with each other so that it is a hazardous undertaking to try and disentangle them.

Already for the early period of Āḻvār religion we must consider three different components. I shall simply label them 'feudal', 'love', and 'theological'. The first projects a social relationship upon the meeting of the I with Kṛṣṇa, e.g., that between chieftain and subject or between patron and bard. In a number of cases we could observe a shift in poetry from allusions to kings or chieftains to references to Kṛṣṇa or his temple which fill the poetic slot of the former.[109] Whatever may have been the sociological or

[108] See pp. 626 with note 26: note also that Hv 63, 30 — a *śloka* of rather 'vulgar' content—has been ignored.

[109] On the ancient association of the Paṇṭiya king with Māyōṉ see 3.35/6 with Appendix VI: this is also expressed in the concluding stanzas of the *kuravai*: pp.

historical background for this shift, the original feudal relationship continues to function in the bhakti poetry. The most obvious example is the notion of 'service', which is typical of the *Paripāṭal*, Kāraikkāl Ammaiyār, and the Early Āḻvārs, and continues with later Alvārs. This is motivated by the awareness that Kṛṣṇa alone is refuge, protection, and support. 'See: I have none but you!'[110] 'I have no need for anything but the support of Him with the sharp arrows.'[111] The outward expression of this service and finding refuge is temple worship accompanied by praise. This model of a feudal relationship which underlies temple service manifests itself very clearly in the three Āḻvārs who were brahmins and connected with the temple: Toṇṭar's TPaḷ, the waking song for Araṅkaṉ, has obvious courtly models; Aṇṭāḷ's TPā culminates in the request

> you cannot reject us as [unfit for] your service;...see, for all the days in seven and seven [future] lives we [want to be] subject to you; we make ourselves your slave-girls.[112]

Periyâḻvār tells us:

> I do not desire clothes or food: by the royal splendour called '[being your] servant' I shall obtain these things.[113]
>
> He is capable of making my soul pure by giving me boiled rice mixed with[114] ghee, . . . betel nuts, . . . ornaments, . . . earrings, . . . and sandal paste, and by [accepting] me in the office of a royal servant.[115]
>
> We . . . your servants wear the yellow garment worn by you, eat out of your vessels, and adorn ourselves with the *tulsī* that has adorned you.[116]

These remarks of Periyâḻvār are full of allusions to the temple ritual, the custom of receiving the various *prasādams* which through the

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177.188f. For a temple filling the slot of a 'historical allusion' see pp. 194.207. For an argument who is the 'real king' see pp. 634f and for phrases originally used to flatter a patron applied to the Vedas and brahmins see p. 207f.

110 4thAnt 7: *nāṉ unnaiy anriy ilēṉ kaṇṭāy.*

111 Ibid. 8: *ilai tuṇai marru . . . kūr ampaṉ allāl kuṟai.*

112 TPā 29: *kurravēl eṅkaḷai kkoḷḷāmaṟ pōkātu . . . kāṇ . . . erraikkum ēḻ ēḻ piṟavikkum uṉ raṉṉōṭu urrōmēy āvōm, uṉakkē nām āṭ ceyvōm.*

113 PâḻTM V, 1, 4: *kūṟai cōṟ' ivai vēṇṭuvat' illai; aṭimaiy eṉṉum ak-kōyiṉmaiyālē ... avai pō taruṅ..*

114 Variant *iṭai* for *eṭai.*

115 PâḻTM I, 1, 8: *neyy iṭai . . . cōṟum . . . aṭṭāṇi-ccēvakamum . . . aṭaikkayum . . . pūṇoṭu . . , kuntalamum . . . cāntamum tantu eṉṉai veḷḷ uyir ākka valla. . .*

116 PâḻTM I, 1, 9, see above p. with note 7.

contact with the *vigraha* have become 'pure', and the temple priest obtaining his livelihood in this manner. Moreover, *attāṇi cēvakam* 'office of a royal servant'[117] shows with all clarity the court model underlying the temple ritual. I think it is this 'feudal' component which most closely corresponds to the old meaning of 'bhakti', viz. loyalty.[118] Although changes like the development of the older Tamil feudalism into a monarchical power structure, or the increasing awareness of Kṛṣṇa as the Absolute, can account for certain transformations of the notion of 'servant/service', e.g., the much more emphatic 'slave', *pāviyēṉ*: 'I, a sinner', or even an expression like *nāyiṉēṉ* 'I, a vile dog [before you]'[119] which replaces the more common *aṭiyēṉ* 'I, your servant', on the whole the relationship is static. Neither could this model alone satisfy the traditional Tamil religious attitude, nor could it determine what became specifically Tamil Kṛṣṇaism.

Already in the *Paripāṭal* (as also in Kāraikkāl Ammaiyār) humble service is complemented by a much more emotional 'love and desire'.[120] In the Early Āḻvārs, this contrast between 'service' and 'love' is actually reflected upon. 'Do not consider as a fault what your servants, who are without patient affection, say out of passion.'[121] It is from this attitude that the Āḻvārs cultivated the drive to 'come close' to Māyōṉ, to 'unite' with him, to 'see' his beauty, etc., a drive with definite sexual undercurrents.[122] This reaches its climax when in TPāṇ's poem the I 'devours' every limb of the *vigraha* in Araṅkam through the eyes, letting them 'stroll about in the soul'.[123] Here we have aesthetic rapture in which old Tamil self-awareness and the choice of Kṛṣṇa's beauty as His most significant attribute combine in a mysticism of union. Similarly, it is perhaps not too far–fetched to compare *iruttal* 'patient waiting' (the conventional *uri of mullai)* with the hum-

[117] MTL *ad locum*: < *āsthāna* + *sevaka*; *āsthāna* in Skt. 'hall of audience'.

[118] See above, 1.424.

[119] Frequent in the TCV: 47, 84, 98, 110f.

[120] See above pp. 213.307

[121] 1stAnt 35: *āṟiyav anp' il aṭiyār tam ārvattāl kūṟiya kuṟṟam ā koḷḷal nī.* √*āṟu* means: 'to bear with, endure, be patient', etc. 2ndAnt 35: desire (<√*vēḷ*) grants happiness-and-security (see note 15 above); 1stAnt 50: desire (*ārvam*) is one of the means 'to see'.

[122] See pp. 299f

[123] Aāp 4: *enṉ uḷḷattuḷ niṉṟ' ulākiṉṟatu.*

ble service expected of the *bhakta;* already in Nammāḷvār, and increasingly in Kalikaṉṟi and Āṇṭāḷ, this emotion changes into a much more passionate desire typical of the *neytal tiṇai* and frequently even enters the realm of *peruntiṇai*. In a way, both models are derived from interpersonal relationships, whether feudal lord: subject or lover: beloved, and both can be regarded as being in perfect harmony with Southern awareness.[124]

But the impact of Northern culture on the South suggested a third mode of conceiving of the meeting between the *bhakta* and Kṛṣṇa, which unlike the previous two is of a pronounced theological (and not interpersonal) origin. It is the conception of the Absolute indwelling the soul (or the 'heart', 'inside'). As mentioned above,[125] I find it impossible to comment on the notional relationship of the *antaryāmī* conception and the theory of theistic *yoga*, since this requires a detailed analysis of the relevant Sanskrit works. So much is clear: the former signifies a passive fact, given to the *bhakta*, and the latter an active method of approaching Kṛṣṇa; even in the Early Āḻvārs, the two are mingled with each other. However, the impact on Southern spirituality has been manifold, and, almost immediately interconnected with the 'feudal' and 'love' components, gave rise to a confusing complexity.

As a fact, Kṛṣṇa's dwelling in the heart is frequently stated;[126] sometimes, it is seen as a process: 'Māyaṉ entered my heart, not to go away',[127] and sometimes it is made conditional: 'inside those who "interiorize" Him'.[128] But this may again be cancelled: 'I shall never forget you, since it is your nature to abide [in me] and always think [of me].'[129] This awareness explains how the Early Āḻvārs could maintain their basic confidence in spite of the transcendental superiority of the Absolute and the existence of sin: 'I always think of Him, for He alone removes sin.'[130] Initially we have definite indications of some form of intellectual bhakti, on account of frequent phrases like 'shall I not forget',[131] 'remember

124 On the further history of these models see Hardy, 1977, pp. 131-41.

125 See p. 292

126 1stAnt 30; 2ndAnt 28, 47; 3rdAnt 3; 4thAnt 30.

127 3rdAnt 94: *eṉ neñcattu poṉṟāmai Māyaṉ pukuntu.*

128 See p. 292

129 2ndAnt 55: *ēṉru maṟant' aṟiyēṉ . . . eppoḻutum niṉṟu niṉaipp' oḻiyā nīrmaiyāl . . . nī.*

130 4thAnt 34: *viṉai . . . tāṉ kaṭattum taṉmaiyāṉ . . . veṟuppaṉō?*

131 Ibid., *veruppaṉō.*

Him',[132] 'I shall never forget Him',[133] or 'who meditate upon Him'.[134] But this is an ideal which proved itself too weak to replace or even dominate the mode of love in which the I meets Kṛṣṇa. Pēy acknowledges 'meditation' as no more than a means toward a higher goal: 'who meditate upon Him, will always see His beauty.'[135] This re-evaluation of intellectual bhakti according to the premises of a much more powerful 'meeting in love' is achieved by various devices. One such device is to place Kṛṣṇa's entering the heart in parallel to his abiding in the temple;[136] another, to regard it as a kind of non-mythical *avatāra*.[137] This meant that instead of deriving the necessity for any meditational exercises from Kṛṣṇa's being the *antaryāmī*, he could be approached with the same emotional attitude as the god in the temple or the Kṛṣṇa of myth (who, as we have seen above, is fundamentally the lover of the *gopīs*). By creating a homogeneous pattern of Kṛṣṇa manifesting Himself in the mythical past—in the temple *vigraha*—in the heart,[138] the Āḻvārs transcended intellectual bhakti through a mysticism of love.

However, one further component must be considered, viz. possession. The idea that Kṛṣṇa indwells the heart (e.g., as the *antaryāmī*) has its less sober parallel in the Southern conception of the divine taking possession of a man and of a man's frenzied dance bringing about this possession. At least four songs, by Nammāḻvār and Parakālaṉ[139] are evocative of this archaic conception, and via TVir 20 we obtain a definite connection between frenzy, love-sickness, and possession.

The friend speaks:

The disease of my taciturn [girl friend]—it is a great deity! Though we hear [from you, *vēlaṉ*] these non-words 'This disease is of such nature,' it is not a godling [who possesses her]. Stop, *vēlaṉ*!

[132] See p. 292 with note 84.

[133] 2ndAnt 55: *eṉṟu maṟant' aṟiyēṉ*: compare 1stAnt 6.

[134] 3rdAnt 12: *uṇarvār*.

[135] See p. 295 note 99.

[136] See pp. 297f

[137] See pp. 285f.330.358f.374

[138] Although it is tempting, I refrain from using the terminology typical of the Pāñcarātra, viz. *vibhūti-arcâvatāra-antaryāmī* (= *hārdâvatāra*), the three lower forms of emanation, *vyūha* being the higher one, and *para* the Absolute.

[139] See TVM IV, 4; V, 6; CTMaṭ; TVM IV, 6: in v. 5: *aṇank' āṭu* 'frenzied dancing, dance in possession'.

Mother, listen to my words: recite the name of Him who devoured the seven worlds and adorn her with a garland of beautiful cool *tulsī*![140]

From the implications of this genre in classical *caṅkam* poetry[141] we infer that the girl's disease is love, and from Nammāḻvār's own innovations (in the TVir) we infer that love is due to possession by Kṛṣṇa.

We have now reached a critical juncture of Āḻvār mysticism. Static service transcended by a passionate drive to unite in love, intellectual bhakti and the awareness of the *antaryāmī* superseded by an emotionalism which, in the extreme case, is compared to possession and which is characterized by the desire to see Kṛṣṇa's beauty: taken together these mean that the meeting of the I and the you takes on dramatic dimensions and rather resembles a non-meeting—separation. Already Pēy-Āḻvār realizes that 'although He is impossible to see, He is in the heart'[142] and wonders, 'will He [always] remain hidden?'[143] The 4thAnt puts the question differently: 'are we really incapable of seeing Him?'[144]

Since we have traced in great detail the development of this mysticism of separation in the Major Āḻvārs, it is unnecessary to repeat our observations here. Nor is it necessary to discuss once again the re-emergence of intellectual bhakti and *yoga* in the Late Āḻvārs, including Periyâḻvār. Yet even then normative ideology, in spite of its tendency to suppress the senses, sensuous enjoyment and sensual beauty, never reaches the stage at which all emotionalism is eliminated.[145]

4.43 *Places of meeting and intervening structures*

In the ideal, the I and you would meet in complete union which,

[140] TVir 20: *ciṉ moḻi nōyō..perun teyvam, in-nōy iṉat' eṉr' iṉ moḻi kēṭkum iḷan teyvam aṉr' itu. vēla! nil nī. eṉ moḻi kēṇmiṉ eṉṉ ammaṉaimīr! ulak' ēḻum uṇṭāṉ coṉ moḻi mālaiy an taṇṇan tuḻāy koṇṭu cūṭṭumiṉē.*

[141] See pp. 138f.

[142] 3rdAnt 83: *avaṉ kāṇp' ariyaṉēlum . . . uḷḷattiṉ uḷḷēy uḷaṉ.*

[143] 3rdAnt 19: *oḻiyumē?*

[144] 10: *yāṅ kāṇa vallamēy allamē?*

[145] On the curious blend of a mysticism of separation and ecstasy and a typical *yoga* ideology in Periyâḻvār see pp. 404f. On the mixture of rapture and puritanism in the TMāl see pp. 436f, and on the even more pronounced normative thought in the TCV see pp. 440ff.

according to the premises of the self-awareness above outlined, would imply the fulfilment of the whole person. Empirically this is clearly impossible, since a contingent being cannot 'unite' with the Absolute, but the confidence of the Early Āḻvārs is not seriously disturbed by this, since the divine itself manifests facets of its nature in phenomenal reality: the mythical descent of the 'avatārs', the *vigraha* in the temple, and the presence in the heart of the devotee, which may even appear as possession or frenzy. But once again, as soon as the I opens itself to the full emotional impact of these manifestations, it is thrown into a state of emotional awareness which is felt by the Major Āḻvārs to be more 'separation' than union. In this state of separation, the I feels left to its own devices and attempts to overcome the distance from the you by various given or created structures which intervene between the I and you and at the same time provide concrete places of meeting. I shall briefly discuss three of these intervening structures: nature, poetry, and secondary complexes.

4.431 *Nature as intervening between the* bhakta *and Kṛṣṇa*

Compared with Taoism or Chinese and Japanese Ch'an/Zen, India as a whole has shown remarkably little interest in nature; any form of nature-mysticism appears alien to Indian religious tradition. When Poykai identifies the whole of nature with the utensils of worship, and his poem with the praise to accompany it, he illustrates not a mystic merging into divine all-pervasive nature, but the typical human attitude *of using* nature for human purposes. When Nammāḻvār exclaims *ē pāvamē* about the disappearance of the 'mountains' and the 'ocean',[146] this is fairly unusual in Kṛṣṇa mysticism. However, classical *akattiṇai* poetry had developed a high degree of sensibility to nature, although the attention paid to nature served a purpose other than 'observing nature as it is', viz. to express human sentiments via descriptions of nature.[147] Thus, to the extent that this sensibility to nature was maintained by the Āḻvârs, there was the possibility of exploring nature, if only to relate it to the emotions of bhakti. This could take a fairly simple and external form: natural items are used in comparisons with Kṛṣṇa. The *Paripāṭal* knows a number of

[146] PTAnt 68.
[147] See pp. 142f.

these[148] which remain standard in later poetry: the *pūvai* flower, the sapphire, the ocean, the raincloud. Among the Early Āḻvārs, particularly Pēy muses upon this inter-relation between nature and Kṛṣṇa: 'The sky of the rainy season, where beautiful clouds filled with rain . . . appear, aims at imitating the body of Māl. . .'[149] Such natural items, reinforced by the *mullai* conventions (where *pūvai* or rain-cloud are typical *karus*) can stimulate emotive responses, and thus it is not surprising that those Āḻvārs who employ the *akattiṇai* conventions exploit and in fact considerably develop such emotive responses to nature, resulting in a cluster of poetic genres, which are listed in the following Table XXV.

TABLE XXV

the girl addresses nature:
TVM II, 1; IV, 4. PTM X, 10. NTM IV; X.

nature stimulates or intensifies the feeling of separation:
TVM IX, 5; IX, 9 (compare V, 4)
PTM XI, 1.2 (compare VIII, 5; IX, 4f) PTMaṭ 23-9; 39-47
NTM IX; X.

messenger poems:
TVM I, 4; VI, 1.8; IX, 7
PTM III, 6; VIII, 4
NTM V; VIII.

In these Āḻvārs the relationship Kṛṣṇa—nature—the girl has become much more complicated than a simple metaphor that might remind the I of Kṛṣṇa; but for details the relevant pages[150] may be consulted. However, it is quite obvious that this interconnection between nature and the *bhakta* remained exclusively based on the functioning of the *akattiṇai* (note that practically all songs listed in Table XXV are girl poems), and that it was never really emancipated from the poetic conceit.[151] But given all these

[148] See p. 204 .

[149] 3rdAnt 86: *eḻil koṇṭa nīr mēkam . . . Māl niṟam pōla kār vāṉam kāṭṭum kalantu.* Compare 3rdAnt 9 and 87.

[150] Nammāḻvār: pp. 338-43; Kalikanri: pp. 378-81; Kōtai: pp. 420-3.

[151] PTAnt 49 and 73 are very rare expressions of a directly personal mystical reaction to nature; this is documented, e.g., for Mādhavendra Purī (see Hardy, 1974, p. 36 with note 88). Compare nevertheless BhP X, 21 and 35.

restrictions and limitations, it is yet possible to say that the three Āḻvārs Caṭakōpaṉ, Kalikaṉṟi, and Āṇṭāḷ experienced nature as symbolic of Kṛṣṇa and as evocative of that special emotion styled separation.

4.432 *Poetry*

We may recall the verse in the Hv 'all the milk-maids had their fun . . . they sang Kṛṣṇa's deeds',[152] which as I suggested[153] might be seen in the context of Kṛṣṇa's absence. Singing about Kṛṣṇa (and that includes writing poetry, music, and dancing or enacting his deeds) had appeared in the previous discussion as one of the major forms in which the I, in separation, can actively try to cope with separation and overcome the distance from Kṛṣṇa. Though somewhat elusive and uneasy about making definite statements about Kṛṣṇa's presence in nature,[154] Nammāḻvār does not hesitate to regard his composing songs and poetry as the direct action of Kṛṣṇa, who thereby becomes 'incarnate' in the poetic creation.[155] Form and content of his poetry and of that of the later Āḻvārs, have been discussed in detail; at this point I would like to discuss one particular poetic structure which played an interesting and variegated rôle in the history of Kṛṣṇa bhakti, although its connection with emotionalism was short-lived (similar to the nature-mysticism inspired by the *akattiṇai*): the *temple landscape*.

According to archaic Tamil religious understanding, not only is the divine envisaged within the confines of concrete reality, but as Murukaṉ it is mobile and active: Murukaṉ may enter a girl or the *vēlaṉ* and possess them, and he is constantly moving about. Compared with this, the Northern concept of the *arcâvatāra*,[156] Viṣṇu's abiding in the *vigraha* of the temple, differs in that the god is *not* mobile. Once Māyōṉ had found his position in the *mullaittiṇai*, it was only natural that—in so far as the poetic *tiṇai* was congruent with the real landscape of Tamilnadu—his concrete abode in the temples came to be referred to in the poetry.

[152] Hv 63, 25.

[153] See p. 75.

[154] I had to rely on the whole on the *poetic symbolism* to unravel this feature: see pp. 333f.340f

[155] See 4.324.1 and p. 316 .

[156] I am unable to specify whether this notion as such was known to the Āḻvārs, they must have been familiar with a similar conception.

But now the *arcâvatāra* concept had to give rise to a marked tension: Māyōn had to remain passive in a landscape in which not only the lovers, but also Murukan, are mobile and act; moreover, Kṛṣṇaite folk culture (which we may presume was not bound by the theology of the *arcâvatāra*) conceived of Kṛṣṇa's being active (fighting with bulls, dancing the *kuravai*, etc.) and simply transposed Vṛndāvana episodes into the Tamilnadu landscape which related only externally to the *mullaittiṇai*. The Major Āḻvārs, who are strongly influenced both by the strict rules of the *akattiṇai* and a prototype of the *arcā* notion, solve the tension in a different manner. Their emotionalism derives to a considerable degree from a 'mystically active' (though physically immobile) temple god—the development of awareness of the *māyā* dynamism underlying the symbolic presence of Kṛṣṇa in the *vigraha* has been discussed above. As we have seen, Nammāḻvār adopted the *akattiṇai* structure precisely in order to communicate this mystical dynamism; given the autonomy of this symbolic system, an active Māyōn (as lover of the girl) thus does not infringe upon the *arcâvatāra* theology (which concerns the real landscape), nor upon myth (in which Māyōn is certainly active, but not in Tamilnadu). This 'temple landscape' reaches its climax in Parakālan,[157] but also its final stage. Once the autonomy of the girl symbolism declined,[158] this precarious edifice could not survive. Already Periyâḻvār and Āṇṭāḷ, who certainly are very temple-conscious, illustrate how the *akattiṇai* has faded and is replaced by folk religion.[159] In the TPaḷ the *arcā* is treated *as if* it were a mobile person who could rise in the morning from his bed. But on a more popular level 'autonomous symbolic structures' or such 'as ifs' had little appeal, and along with the trend towards mythical thought,[160] Māyōn becomes envisaged as active in Tamilnadu: the *sthalapurāṇas* are born.[161] Thus it becomes possible for 108 Viṣṇus to come from their respective temples in

[157] Compare the number of temple poems in TVM and PTM: 43 per cent and 75 per cent.

[158] The girl becomes directly symbolic of the *bhakta*: pp. 398f.

[159] Note in particular how in the folk ritual depicted in the TPā real landscape and mythical Vṛndāvana merge.

[160] See p. 411.

[161] I do not think that any of these date as far back as the period under discussion. See also Hardy, 1977, pp. 142-9 and Hardy, 1978, No.5.3.

Tamilnadu and elsewhere[162] to Āṇṭāḷ's *svayaṃvara*.[163] However, these late developments fall outside the scope of our study, and their relevance for emotionalism would require exploration.[164]

I would like to conclude these observations on poetry as one of the meeting grounds by looking at *emotional devices of access into the Kṛṣṇa mysteries*. Poems about the temple landscape, once they are sung by *bhaktas* and relished in their beauty, can be regarded as means to enter emotionally into the beauty and the mysteries of Kṛṣṇa. Similarly, the strictly *akattiṇai* poems in the TVir, in which a he and a she act in a landscape where Kṛṣṇa is 'metaphorically' present, allow the reader access to Kṛṣṇa via the eroticism created by the relation of the he and she. But both approaches are fragile, since they require familiarity with the sophisticated *akattiṇai*. However, the underlying mechanism could be maintained and in fact extended by employing much commoner areas of experience, the emotional aspects of which could be felt more easily than the *akam*. Such a common ground of experience is the life of a girl until she reaches marriageable age, or the life of a mother bringing up a young son; these are explored in Āṇṭāḷ's and Periyâḻvār's poems respectively. The emotions of the growing girl, and of the mother concerned with her child, could be regarded as the carrier waves by means of which the *bhakta* finds entrance into Kṛṣṇa's mysteries (just as, generally speaking, the love of the he and she functions as such a carrier wave). Given the tendency to pay increasing and more exclusive attention to myth as illustrating these mysteries, Periyâḻvār's concentration on Yaśodā as the mother, and Kulacēkaraṉ's concern with Devakī, follow quite naturally. However, in so far as we are concerned with the Āḻvārs, we can hardly speak of any systematic bhakti exercise consisting in such emotional identifications with figures of Kṛṣṇa myth.[165] Entrance into the mysteries of Kṛṣṇa means exposing oneself to the impact

[162] See pp. 256-8 and Map 1.

[163] DSC XII, particularly 1-20.

[164] I hope to publish sometime in the future my studies of Tamilnadu temple culture, based on an extensive journey during summer 1975 to most of the temples sung about by the Āḻvārs. Initial studies are Hardy, 1977 and 1978.

[165] Thus a statement like the following could be misleading, if *Vorbereitung* is not carefully defined: '*Die Bhakti als emotional-suggestiv erzeugte Identifikation mit Personen aus der Kṛṣṇa-Legende wurde in der* rasa-*Theorie der bengalischen Vaiṣṇavas systematisch entwickelt* nach Vorbereitung *durch die Āḻvārs*.' (Gail, 1969, p. 13, my italics.)

of His *māyā*, and thus these emotional devices by no means aim at a passive contemplation, but at letting *māyā* completely take over, up to the frenzy (*māl*), ecstasy, 'possession'.

4.433 *Secondary structures*

In course of time, the emotional drive to meet Kṛṣṇa, if not fully and directly, at least via the symbols, loses some of its spontaneity, perhaps for no other reason than that these symbols developed, and assumed increasingly complex and sophisticated proportions. After some generations, the *bhakta* is not only aware of himself in relation to Kṛṣṇa, but also in relation to *previous bhaktas* who, given the Indian and pan-human tendency to idealize the past, had to be more perfect than himself. Thus the gulf between the I and Kṛṣṇa widens and we can speak of secondary structures intervening between the two poles. The *ideal bhakta* as focus of attention is very pronounced in Kulacēkaran̲,[166] and Madhurakavi concentrates his bhakti on Nammāl̲vār.[167] A similar attitude can be detected in the TMāl, where we find something approaching the apotheosis of Śrīraṅgam.[168] In the latter case we also notice a novel tendency: to place the efficiency of bhakti not so much in the emotional intensity of the response to Kṛṣṇa's *māyā*, but in the act of grace, which nevertheless shows a curious admixture of quasi-magical ideas.[169] A very similar attitude is expressed in the TCV: 'Who recite as their Vedic chant the eight letters of His name (= the *mantra Oṃ namo Nārāyaṇāya*) will be able to rule over the heavens.'[170] At the same time the TCV tells us time and again that only total surrender to Viṣṇu can save: 'Please tell me, who has come to you for refuge: "do not fear!"'[171]

4.44 *Āl̲vār mysticism in society*

Among the features which distinguish the Al̲vārs from the religious

166 See p. 433.

167 See p. 438.

168 See pp. 437f.

169 See *ibid.*, (e.g., TMāl 13).

170 TCV 78: *avan̲ peyar eṭṭ' el̲uttum vāram ākav ōtuvārkaḷ vallar vāṉam āḷavē*. Similarly, 77. The *aṣṭâkṣara-mantra* itself is frequently mentioned in the *Prabandham*, e.g., PâlTM V, 1, 3, 6. I, 1, 3, 11; 1stAnt 57.

171 TCV 92: *nin̲ ˇ ran̲akku aṭaikkalam pukuntav enn̲ai añcal enn̲a vēṇṭumē*. See BhG XVIII, 66 which this stanza paraphrases and which is the *locus classicus* of *prapatti*.

sources in the *caṅkam corpus* and also from the Northern material so far discussed is the fact that they are not only aware of themselves as individuals, but also as individual members of a culture, Tamil society. Some aspects of this complex interaction between society and the saints may here be discussed, under two headings: formative influences upon the Āḻvārs, and their impact upon society.

4.441 *Formative influences*

We may point out the uniquely important rôle which Maturai and the Pāṇṭiya milieu have played right from the beginning in the development of Southern Kṛṣṇaism. In addition to the ancient association of the Pāṇṭiyas with Māyōṉ—an association which might have contributed even to the link Māyōṉ~*mullai*[172]—and to Tamil renaissance culture which produced works of a popular Kṛṣṇaite inspiration, Nammāḻvār, Periyâḻvār, and Āṇṭāḷ lived in the Pāṇṭiya-nāṭu and were heavily influenced by its cultural traditions. It was Nammāḻvār who achieved the final integration of the *akattiṇai* with Kṛṣṇa religion. I have attempted to explain this achievement by postulating that the *akattiṇai* was more than a poetic convention, in fact a focus of education and an associative structure affecting the person brought up in it. I have suggested that Nammāḻvār in this way was conditioned to associate Kṛṣṇa with separation and to develop those inchoate facets of the Early Āḻvārs' poetry which could yield to such an interpretation. Although perhaps difficult for us to envisage, Nammāḻvār's milieu oriented itself according to poetic, and not mythical, symbols.

Other aspects of the intellectual scene in the South contemporary with the Āḻvārs have not been touched upon. If we knew more about Buddhism in the South, we might perhaps detect in Nammāḻvār traces of Mādhyamika dialectics, but I mention this simply as a possible line of investigation. I have discovered practically no traces of monism or illusionism (*advaita-*, *māyā-*, or *vijñāna-vāda*) in Nammāḻvār, but here again I cannot make a definite statement. One of the major formative influences not only on the Āḻvārs but also upon the *Paripāṭal* and Kāraikkāl Ammai, was temple-oriented religion, but as explained in the beginning (1.43), the unexplored field of the Pāñcarātra, Vaikhānasa, and the Āgamas does not yet allow us to place Āḻvār temple religion in a precise relation to these complexes.

[172] See p. 156 .

We have seen that Bhāsa was presumably known in the South from an early date onward,[173] and certainly Periyâḷvār shows that he was familiar with the Hv.[174] I have tried to show that the Br/ViP version of the *gopī* episodes was unknown to the South[175]; but what is remarkable is the fact that the overall picture of emotional bhakti which has emerged from our analysis of the Southern sources in essence closely resembles the ideological undercurrents of Hv 63, 15-35.[176] This essential similarity cannot presumably be explained as due to direct influence, but a certain ideological stimulus from the Hv *ślokas* on the Āḷvārs (other than Periyâḷvār), however indirect it may have been, seems more than likely. Passionate desire to 'drink' with the eyes Kṛṣṇa's beauty, so as to obtain transcendental happiness, and to sing about him when absent—this is in essence the ideology found both in the Hv and in most of the Āḷvārs.

The material collected in 3.5 suggests that the Kṛṣṇaism of earlier Āḷvārs has been embedded in a general context of Kṛṣṇaite popular religion. But our analysis of the Āḷvār material has made it clear, I think, that the two are not identical and that Āḷvār religion cannot simply be derived from popular Krsnaism. Myths like the bullfight, Pinnai, *kuravai*, *kuruntu* tree, etc., not unknown to the Āḷvārs, are typical of this folk religion, which knows dance representations of some of them, while *yoga,* transcendental awareness, mysticism of union or separation, etc. are typical of the Āḷvārs. Thus archaic and popular Southern Krsnaism can be considered as a formative influence upon the earlier Āḷvārs in only a very limited sense; with later Āḷvārs this changes somewhat (see below).

4.442 *Social impact of Āḷvār religion*

The most convenient point of departure is an analysis of the various literary genres found in the *Prabandham.* The theoretical principle to guide us here is that a specific literary genre or form corresponds to a specific position and function in the social environment.[177]

Three genres have a quite obvious social function. **I.** Songs

[173] See pp. 198f.
[174] See pp. 413.
[175] See pp. 458f.
[176] See pp. 75ff.
[177] Biblical scholarship has coined the term *Sitz im Leben* for this interrelation.

composed for the actual temple ritual, illustrated by the TPaḷ (and TPā 16-22).[178] **II.** Songs written for religious festivals, folk rituals, etc., of which the TPā and presumably also NTM I[179] are typical examples. **III.** Songs for games which add religious significance to otherwise secular pastimes: NTM IV for the girls' game *kūṭal*; PāḷTM 1,4, PāḷTM VII and VIII are *tālēlōs* 'lullabies'; PTM X, 5 and PāḷTM I, 7 would be sung by mothers playing *cappāṇi* with their babies; PTM X, 4 and PāḷTM III, 1 are sung while breast-feeding; in fact most of PāḷTM I, 4 to II, 8 are songs for young mothers.[180]

No doubt, genres **II.** and **III.** are popular, and it is in these songs that the Āḻvār movement links up with popular Southern Kṛṣṇaism. But various authors have very rashly deduced from this that the *whole* Āḻvār movement was 'of the masses'. Not only are these genres late (documented only after the eighth century), but to make matters even less suited for sweeping generalizations, the TPal, TPā, NTM, and PāḷTM were written by the only Āḻvārs we know for certain to have been brahmins! I shall return to this point below.

There are further genres in the *Prabandham*, which, on the whole older, have a less obvious social context and must be unravelled with the help of hagiographical material form the eleventh century and later. Śrīvaiṣṇava hagiography tells us that a brahmin (Śrīraṅga–)Nāthamuni rediscovered the TVM, compiled the *Prabandham*, and composed the music for it. In these accounts we find numerous indications of how the hagiographers envisaged the social setting of individual works prior to the constitution of the *Prabandham*.

Nāthamuni was a brahmin in charge of the temple ritual of

[178] A very productive genre in post-Āḻvār times; almost every Vaiṣṇava temple in the South now has its own *paḷḷiyelucci* or *suprabhātam* (the Skt. version).

[179] NTM VI is to-day used at Vaiṣṇava weddings, but I would doubt that it was actually composed as a marriage song. PTM X, 2 and 3 are two dance-songs in which the Rākṣasas of Laṅkā, defeated by Rāma, praise and submit to him; there is the possibility that popular Kṛṣṇaism knew of a representational dance in which the episode was enacted.

[180] Periyāḻvār is usually considered as one of the first poets of a very productive genre, the *piḷḷaittamiḻ* (see Zvelebil, 1974, p. 213; 1975, pp. 158; 189 note 132). In later Vaiṣṇava circles numerous *piḷḷaittamiḻs* were written, e.g., of Nammāḻvār or Pārthasārathi, the god of the temple in Tiruvallikkēṇi.

Rājagopāla (Tamil: Maṉṉaṉār Emperumāṉ) in Vīranārāyaṇapuram in the Naṭunāṭu.[181]

One day—I quote the GPPT—a few Śrīvaiṣṇavas arrived from the Western region and worshipped Maṉṉaṉār. They recited before Him the *tiruvāymoḻi* 'O Nectar that never lets thirst subside. . .!'[182] When Nāthamuni heard this, he became greatly delighted and spoke to them: 'It says [in stanza 11 of the song] "these ten verses among the thousand"; do you have the whole work?' But they replied, 'We know only these ten stanzas.' He then asked them: 'Is there any *Śrīkōśam* in your country? Are there any who would be experts in the songs?' They replied: 'We have only this one song; more does not exist anywhere.'[183]

The GPPV[184] adds that the pilgrims had learned the song from brahmins in Kuṭantai (Ārāvamutaṉ 'Nectar that never satisfies' is the name of Viṣṇu in the main temple of Kuṭantai/Kumbakonam). Nāthamuni sets out to search for the whole work and goes to Kurukūr, Nammāḻvār's home town, which is mentioned in stanza 11.[185] There he asks: 'Are there any chanters of the TVM in this place? Are there any *Śrīkōśams* here?'[186] The GPPV adds that all the brahmins of Kurukūr know is Madhurakavi's poem which has come down to them 'through the *sampradāya*'.[187] Later in the legends about Nāthamuni we hear that he composed music in the *devagāna* style and ensured the transmission of the *corpus* by teaching all the songs to two of his nephews and other people.[188] When two temple-girls[189] compete before a king and the *martyagāna* style is given preference, Nāthamuni vindicates the girl who masters the *devagāna* style by working a miracle which proves the superiority of the latter music over the former.[190]

[181] GPPT p. 97; GPPV p. 47; PA 106,7-14.

[182] TVM V, 8.

[183] GPPT p. 101.

[184] GPPV p. 50.

[185] The GPPV pp. 50f and PA 107, 12-6 make him first go to Kuṭantai, to find that the brahmins there know only the one song dedicated to their temple.

[186] GPPT p. 101. In PA 107, 20 Nāthamuni enquires after any reciter

[187] GPPV p. 51: (*sampradāyâgatam*)*ākaiyālē*; explained in note ibid.: (*parampar*)*aiy āka vantatu.*

[188] GPPT p. 103; GPPV pp. 52f; PA 107, 94-106.

[189] This is my own coinage, designed to ensure that none of the later connotations of the Skt. or Tamil words are uncritically projected into the early period we are discussing here; GPPT has *vārastrī*, GPPV *dāsī*, and PA *vārâṅganā*.

[190] Alternative terms are *divya-* and *mānuṣa/manuṣya*. GPPT pp. 104f; GPPV

These hagiographical accounts are interesting in that they mention a variety of professional and institutional terms in connection with the recitation and transmission of Āḻvār poems: *pāṭam pōvār* 'those able to sing', *ōtiṉavarkaḷ* 'reciters', *pāṭhaka* 'dto'; *paṭhana* 'recitation'; *Śrīkōśam* 'sacred song corpus'; *deva-gāna*-style; *vāra-strī*, *dāsī*, *vārâṅganā* '[temple-] prostitute'; *sam-pradāya*, *paramparā* 'school-tradition, line of transmission'. At least in two cases, the *Prabandham* itself alludes to the same complex; I would suggest[191] that Madhurakavi may well have been a professional reciter of the TVM, and the author of the Aāp is known, from about the late tenth century onward,[192] as the Bard, *Pāṇar*. Moreover, the TPā makes constant reference to the mysterious *paṟai*,[193] which *contra* the commentators *ad* TPā 28[194] cannot mean anything but 'drum'. We are told that with the drum the girls will 'sing about the Fortune of Śrī (=Kṛṣṇa)',[195] and that to receive the drum means for them to become His slaves[196]—to be his slaves, seen in the light of the *mārkaḻi* ritual, thus sublimates the desire of girls for husbands. Once again we seem to be on the surface of a most complex situation, but I cannot here enter into a discussion of it. However, even the few observations made here would suggest that in a number of ways (through professional family tradition, free choice, with or without institutional or professional links with a temple) both men and women were involved in cultivating certain genres of literature, samples of which are preserved in the *Prabandham* and which, as much more sophisticated creations than the folk genres **II** and **III**, necessitated professional training and institutional support. Somewhat artificially I would add to our list: **IV.** bardic poems propagating Vaiṣṇavism, exemplified by the first four *Antâtis* and, on a much larger scale, the

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pp. 53f; PA 108, 1-33. Compare *Āycci*. 9], pp. note 192, for another distinction of two types of music.

191 Compare pp. 438f.

192 From the Tamil *taṉiyaṉ* of the Aāp, attributed to Yāmuna's disciple Tirumalai Nampi.

193 TPā 1, 8, 10, 16, 24-9.

194 3000 and 6000, from there MTL *ad locum*, Aṉṉa., etc.: 'desired object', which is nothing but a vague circumscription.

195 TPā 25: *Tiru ttakka celvam . . . yām pāṭi* (*paṟai tarutiy ākil* 'if you give us the drum').

196 TPā 29; see p. 461 note 112.

TVM as a whole;[197] **V.** pilgrim songs about specific temples, many of which are built into the TVM;[198] and the bulk of the PTM consists of these actually arranged according to the geography of such a pilgrimage. To these I add an *asterisked* **VI.** songs designed for girls, 'Kṛṣṇa's slaves', attached to a temple and meant for song or dance performances.[199]

There are two implications in the genres **IV** and ***VI** which I shall briefly point out. Whatever precisely the institutional context may have been, and in whatever manner we may connect these bardic genres with the bardic poetry of the classical *caṅkam* period, in terms of Tamil culture during the second half of the first millennium AD they represent some of its most sophisticated and erudite (elitist, intellectual. . .) expressions. A provincial landlord like Nammāḻvār or local chieftains like Parakālaṉ (and Kulacēkaraṉ) represent the cultural elite,[200] which succeeded in constructing an imposing edifice by combining the complexities of classical *caṅkam* culture with the equally complex cosmos of Vaiṣṇavism. A more popular idiom begins only in the eighth century, with some of Parakālaṉ's poems, and only through the brahmin contribution to Āḻvār poetry do we reach a true folk level, illustrated by genres **II** and **III.** Thus to describe an overall development during the Āḻvār period we would have to speak of two trends: increasing brahminization, and increasing popularization transforming the elitist, bardic, and sophisticated earlier stages.

However, increasing brahminization contained in itself different aspects; one was certainly the 'increasing popularization', but another—whatever its accidental or necessary connection with the first may have been—was an increasing reorientation according to normative ideology. Various aspects of this trend have been mentioned previously; here I shall point out the implications it had for genres **IV** and ***VI.** We may distinguish two stages: one

197 Thus the *antâti* device itself, the stereotyped phraseology, etc., may be considered to be typical oral bardic features, similar to those analysed by Kailasapathy.

198 An example of a song of the TVM functioning in isolation from the TVM as a whole, viz. as pilgrim's song, is TVM V, 8 (see p. 475).

199 After all, *dāsī* (see note 189) is the Skt. word corresponding to *āḷ*. Superficially an identification of these 'slave-girls' with the notorious *devdasīs* may be tempting; but barring a full monograph on the subject, silence on this topic is preferable to wild speculation. For a later period see Hardy, 1977, pp. 138-40.

200 See, for example, p. 227 .

documented in the *Prabandham*, and the second known from later sources. In two places in the *Prabandham* we find reflections on the general relation between *bhaktas* and the *varṇa*-system, and indirectly about the Āḻvār making these statements in relation to the *varṇa*-based establishment. The tension and the attempted synthesis arising from this relation have been discussed above.[201] For the later period the tension becomes much more pronounced. Hagiography reveals what society thought about the social status of a bard (*pāṇar*) from the late tenth or early eleventh century onward in its treatment of the story of Tiruppāṇ-Āḻvār. When a Śrīraṅgam brahmin saw the Āḻvār somewhere in his vicinity, he threw a stone at him to drive such a low caste person away from his sight. It needed divine intervention to allow this great *bhakta* to enter the temple (carried on the back of the brahmin who had thrown the stone[202]) and look at the beautiful *vigraha*.[203] When in the same sources the girl singing in the *devagāna* style is designated, the terms used (*vārastrī* etc.) all denote a prostitute.[204] Finally, it is not surprising that the commentators remain silent on the connotations of the *paṟai* 'drum', mentioned in the TPā, for a look at the MTL[205] or the DED reveals that these connotations are 'vulgar, low', and the derivative *paṟaiyaṉ* (Malayalam *paṟayaṉ*, Kota *parn*)[206] is the etymon for, and connotative with, English pariah. In other words, once the *varṇa*-system was consolidated in the South, many of the Āḻvārs had to appear in a totally new light—as members of low castes or even out-castes, and the myth of the Āḻvār movement as social/religious revolt against the establishment was born.[207]

[201] See pp. 436-9.

[202] This is the explanation of the Skt. name of the Āḻvār, Munivāhana; see p. 436, with notes 6-8.

[203] The legend is found GPPT pp. 52-7; GPPV pp. 37f; PA 96.

[204] See notes 189 and 199.

[205] *Paṟai-kkōlam/vēṣam* 'mean attire or appearance, as of a *paṟaiya*'; - *ttuṇi* 'coarse or dirty clothes'; - *ppāṭṭu* 'vulgar song, low abuse'; - *ppēccu* 'low, vulgar language'.

[206] DED 3319.

[207] A good summary of such theories, particularly those of Marxist writers, can be found in Zvelebil, 1973, pp. 190-9. Although I agree on the whole with Zvelebil's criticism of these theories and his own conclusions (e.g. '. . . we see in the Tamil Hindu revival the triumph of emotion over intellect, of the concrete over the abstract, of the acceptance of life over its ascetic denial, of something near and homely against

One final point deserves mention in our summary of the Āḻvār material discussed. Apart from their religion itself, the Āḻvārs made one major contribution to society: a reconsolidated Tamil awareness. Obviously a Tamil awareness was implied in classical *caṅkam* culture, and obviously it re-established itself during the renaissance, and in that sense the 4thAnt,[208] Nammāḻvār,[209] or Āṇṭāḷ[210] simply participate in a general phenomenon. The positive break-through and contribution is made when Nammāḻvār says: 'Īcaṉ who makes me sing lovely Tamil verses about himself'.[211] Here Tamil culture is accepted as capable of containing revelation, and thus set in parallel to the Vedānta, which according to normative understanding could alone be regarded as the Vedic heritage. With Madhurakavi's statement that Nammāḻvār's TVM represents a Tamil version of the Vedas themselves we reach the climax of this stubborn defence of Tamilness, and the foundation of a conception which later Śrīvaiṣṇavism held on to and built upon in an equally stubborn manner: the *Ubhayavedānta*.[212] Whether through myth and legend,[213] or a grandiose theologoumenon,[214] or in the vast commentarial literature on Nammāḻvār and the *Prabandham* in general, Śrīvaiṣṇavism has borne out the claim that Tamil culture,

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something alien and distant, and, above all, the acceptance of positive love against cold morality or intellectually coloured compassion', p. 199), I believe that the picture presented of the Āḻvār movement in the previous pages allows for much greater differentiation and adds colour and shade to such black-and-white generalizations.

208 Stanza 1: 'I myself being the first one, have communicated deep meaning by means of the *antâti*' (*yāṉ mukam āy antâti mēl iṭṭu aṟivittēṉ āḻ poruḷai*).

209 See TVir 48 and TVM VII, 9.

210 See p. 228 .

211 TVM VII, 9, 1 (see pp. 326f).

212 I do not know whether there exists a conventional etymology of the term. Theoretically it could be analysed either (*ubhaya-Veda*) + *anta* or *ubhaya* + (*Vedânta*), but either way we get the final meaning: 'the philosophical school *cum* religious movement which derives its inspiration from both the Sanskrit Vedas/ Vedânta and the 'Tamil Vedas' of Nammāḻvār.' See note 20 *ad* 4.373.

213 For instance the PA tells us (72-6) how Agastya and Viśvakarman Tvaṣṭṛ curse each other, so that the former went to the Drāviḍa country and the latter made Drāmiḍī (= Tamil) 'similar to the language of the Piśācas' (72, 26); Agastya, now in exile, performs *tapas* and as reward Viṣṇu causes his weapons and Bhūmi to be born in the Drāviḍa country, 'to turn the *śrutis* into Drāviḍa [works]' (73, 57). Much shorter DSC I, 78-92.

214 See Appendix XI No.5, on Veṅkaṭanatha's theology of Tamil revelation.

the Tamil Āḻvārs, and the Tamil Veda constitute an autonomous though integral complex of Hinduism, a claim which to my knowledge has nowhere else in the history of Hinduism been made, not even in Southern Śaivism.[215] It follows naturally that such a claim would give rise to opposition; slander, scorn, criticism, or even persecution by society at large have been constant themes both in the *Prabandham* and in later periods.

However, the consolidation of the *Ubhayavedânta*, with its claim that the Tamil Veda constitutes *a second norm*, must not be allowed to obscure a remarkable phenomenon. The essential feature of this second norm, when compared with normative ideology, would be the emotional bhakti of the Āḻvārs; it is this facet which would make the second norm different from the first (our normative ideology). But it is precisely emotional bhakti which faded out of the awareness of later Śrīvaiṣṇavism; behind the façade of the *Ubhayavedānta*, the pressures of normative ideology remove what its anti-emotional premises could not tolerate as second norm and thus as challenge—emotionalism.[216]

But the disappearance of the emotional Kṛṣṇa bhakti which particularly the Major Āḻvārs developed did not entail the end of this form of religion altogether. Its continuation was ensured in an area of Southern Vaiṣṇavism which in the eyes of the early Ācāryas was anathema: in a theistic, Vaiṣṇava form of *advaita-Vedânta*, or more precisely in the *Bhāgavata-Purāṇa*, which adopts a philosophical position closely related to it.

[215] As mentioned frequently, I have on the whole excluded Śaivism from our discussion. But as far as I know the Nāyaṉār movement never gave rise to anything like the *Ubhayavedānta*, and the much later Śaiva-Siddhânta conforms to normative ideology. The modern situation, in which *smārta* brahmins, who are *advaitins*, profess Saivism, does not derive from two autonomous and parallel norms, but from the *advaita* axiom that bhakti is a lower—*vyāvahārika*—form of religion. Gonda, 1970, lacking first-hand knowledge of the Tamil sources, has little to contribute to the comparison between Vaiṣṇava *Ubhayavedânta* and Śaivism in the South.

[216] This judgement is solely based on emotionalism as the standard of reference; in the discussion of *prapatti*, which eventually led to the schism into Teṉ - and Vaṭakaḷai, a considerable amount of non- and anti-normative material is encountered. Moreover, poets like Piḷḷai pPerumāḷ Aiyaṅkār and V ṅkaṭanātha exemplify the—now somewhat hybrid—continuation of Āḻvār poetic forms and sentiments.

PART FIVE

THE BHĀGAVATA-PURĀṆA

5.1 Introduction

The previous pages have shown that the formal unity and homogeneity of the *corpus* of the Āḻvārs' poetry (the *Prabandham*) by no means correspond to a homogeneity of content. Even within the limited area of our observation, viz. emotional bhakti, we have noted considerable differences between individual poets and between groups of Āḻvārs, and moreover, some *caṅkam* material which we have assumed to be almost contemporary with some of the Āḻvārs' poems proves in many respects to be different from the earlier material documented in the *Prabandham*. The period under discussion, say sixth to tenth century AD., may generally be characterized as extremely flexible and undefined, which means that indigenous trends and various Northern stimuli left sufficient scope for a great variety of sociological, doctrinal and personal idiosyncrasies and innovations. This situation gave birth to superb and unique creations (examples of which I see in the TVM and the BhP), but it is not surprising that after a century or so the ferment calmed down and more stable (and rigid) systems evolved. On the whole this was due to the consolidated influence of the Vedānta in the South, which gave rise to the formation of schools of thought like the *advaita-Vedānta* and *Viśiṣṭâdvaita*, which enter into open antagonism with each other.

Śrīvaiṣṇavism (= Viśiṣṭâdvaita) gives Nāthamuni the credit for having rediscovered the TVM. This can be regarded as historical fact, but overlaid by theology. Yāmuna, the first exponent of Viśiṣṭâdvaita, was the grandson of Nāthamuni, and Yāmuna's disciples were Rāmānuja's teachers; this is the nucleus of a *sampradāya* without which no philosophical school in India could hope to find acceptance. But how to proceed back in time from Nāthamuni? In fact, there was no difficulty here, since, as we have seen, the course had already been laid out: Nāthamuni received from Nammāḻvār (either directly or in a mystic vision) the TVM, which according to Madhurakavi is the Tamil *Veda*,

and according to Nammāḻvār himself, Viṣṇu's revelation in Tamil of Himself—so the *sampradāya* had its legitimate origin in Viṣṇu the *parabrahman*.[1] Even beyond this formal construction of a *sampradāya* via Nammāḻvār, Śrīvaiṣṇavism in many ways had constant recourse to the Āḻvārs, and yet it is not an area in which emotionalism survived or developed.[2] When we investigate the Southern cultural scene from the ninth to the tenth century, it is in other areas that we discover works which have in some form or other integrated Āḻvār emotionalism: the *Mukundamālā*,[3] *Kṛṣṇa-karṇâmṛta*, and, by far the most important, the *Bhāgavata-Purāṇa*. Although the first two works had some influence on the development of emotional bhakti in Northern India, it is sufficient for our purposes to deal with the BhP alone.

In a way it is quite amusing to find even in the thirteenth/fourteenth centuries the awareness of 'Tamilness' still so strong that Vedāntadeśika can say that Viṣṇu, using the Āḻvārs as a tenfold quasi-*avatāra*, 'summarized the . . . *Vedas* and expounded them in a language comprehensible to *all* people'.[4] Obviously Tamil as a language was incomprehensible to anyone outside Tamilnadu, to say nothing of the sophisticated *akattiṇai* system employed in Tamil poetry. Thus, in realistic terms, only a Sanskrit work could hope to convey to the rest of India something of Āḻvār religion. Once brahmin culture had consolidated itself in the South, the prerequisite for such a 'translation' was at hand.

We have seen above[5] that it is possible to construct a whole cycle of *gopī* episodes by combining the various mythical songs found in the different Āḻvārs, a cycle which need have no other source than the Hv version, and which almost certainly has not been influenced by the Br/ViP version. It is impossible to say when and in which milieu in the South the latter version came to be known.

[1] See Yāmunâcārya's *Stotraratnam*, 1 to 6, for the blueprint of this construction. Compare Krishnaswamy Aiyangar, 1920, pp. 17ff.

[2] Obviously this has to remain here a mere claim; it would require a full monograph, investigating a vast *corpus* of works, to show that emotionalism in my sense is *absent* in Śrīvaiṣṇavism; compare 4.442 (p. 480) above.

[3] See 4.21 note 56 no. 2; while I do not think that it was written by the Āḻvār Kulacēkaraṉ, many of its stanzas show definite influence of various other Āḻvārs, and for this reason I mention the work here.

[4] *Rahasyatrayasāram* p. 36; see note 32 below, and Appendix XI, 5.

[5] See Table XXIV and its evaluation.

But once known, its normative interpretation of the *gopī* affairs must have had a considerable appeal for brahmin culture in the South, and it is thus not surprising that the BhP chose the Br/ViP as its literary model.

The BhP is a *purāṇa* of medium size, of 18000 units.[6] Undoubtedly, its Book X (*Kṛṣṇa-carita*) has enjoyed the greatest popularity, and within Book X the *gopī* episodes exerted the strongest influence on the later religious developments. Thus we may concentrate in our discussion on those sections. In spite of considerable attention paid by scholars to the BhP, it has remained the most mysterious and obscure of the *purāṇas*; in particular its social environment and its unprecedented emotional bhakti are still problematic.[7] Through our study of the Āḻvārs new light can be thrown on these mysteries.

Chapter 5.2 will prepare the ground for the following analysis; in it I shall look at the general character of the work, its provenance, date, and social setting. On the whole it contains little more than a summary of results or suggestions made by previous authors; only with the help of the material gathered in 5.3 and 5.4 can more definite statements be made. 5.31 compares the treatment of the *gopī* episodes in the BhP with that of the Br/ViP; this comparison will reveal the unique features in the BhP version. In 5.32, these unique features will be explained as borrowings and adaptations of typical Āḻvār material. 5.33 evaluates the material by discussing certain problems raised in 5.21. 5.4 turns to the religious content of the BhP passages, and by differentiating a conscious ideological interpretation and an unconscious poetic expression of the *gopī* emotionalism, I shall try to show in which sense the BhP can be regarded as the transmitter of Āḻvār religion. A more general evaluation in the context of emotional bhakti will be given in 5.5. Finally 5.6 will investigate the impact of the BhP on the secular poetic tradition.

5.2 Preparation

I begin with a brief summary of various opinions that have been

6 The BhP itself (in XII, 13) provides the figures for the size of the 18 *Mahāpurāṇas*; the Skanda with 81,100 is the longest, and the *Mārkaṇḍeya* with 9,000 the shortest. The unit is presumably a *grantha*, 32 syllables.

7 See 1.3 and 1.5.

expressed about the date of the BhP, and shall analyse two sources which appear to provide us with a firm *terminus ad quem*. But since 5.32 allows us to make fairly definite assumptions about a *terminus a quo*, I have ignored all suggestions of an earlier date. The provenance of the BhP will be the second topic of discussion; independently of 5.32, the evidence for an origin of the *purāṇa* in South India is extensive, but I have discussed it in Appendix XI, so that the details will not interrupt this discussion. Finally I add a brief survey of various idiosyncrasies and components which allow us to describe the character of the BhP as an *opus universale*.

5.21 *The date of the BhP*

On the whole it is meaningless to speak of 'the date' of a Sanskrit *purāṇa*, because many generations of bards, etc., have been involved in the accumulation of material which at some stage has then been given a name, 'the × (–) *Purāṇa*'. But to adopt such a critical attitude may sometimes be misleading; in the case of the BhP it would ignore the pronouncedly homogeneous character of this text.[8] I shall try to discuss this point in greater detail after the analysis of the *gopī* episodes, but for the moment it may be assumed that the overall uniformity of the work is due to a very restricted milieu in space and time, if not to one author.[9] We can then ask what historical information is available about the BhP.[10]

Since 1887 a fairly definite *terminus ad quem* has been known, viz. the mention of the BhP in Al-Bīrūnī's account of India[11] (*c.* 1030 AD[12]). He first gives a list of 18 *purāṇas*, in which the BhP does not occur. But then he says that a different list is found in the *Viṣṇu-Purāṇa*[13] (من بشن پران, viz. *min B(i)šn(u) p(u)rān*),[14] a

[8] Gail, 1969, p. 10, says categorically 'Ein *bestimmtes Datum finden zu wollen, in dem* ein *Autor den Text verfaßt hätte, wird ein vergeblicher Versuch sein.*' Compare Masson/Patwardhan, 1969, p. 36 'a hazardous undertaking'.

[9] 'Stamp of a unified composition' (Winternitz), quoted Hopkins, 1966, p. 4.

[10] Bibliographical references to the literature on the date of the BhP can be found in Hopkins, 1966, pp. 3–6, notes 4–10.16; van Buitenen, 1966, pp. 25f, notes 17f; Gail, 1969, pp. 10–3, notes 38, 44f, 47ff; Tagare, 1976, vol. 1, pp. XXXIV—XXXVII.

[11] The Arabic text is edited Sachau 1887; the relevant passage is translated Sachau, 1910, pp. 130f.

[12] Sachau, 1887, on title page.

[13] Viz. ViP III, 6, 21 (van Buitenen, 1966, p. 215, note 17).

[14] Sachau, 1887, p. 63 (of Arabic text), line 8.

list that 'has been read out to me'. In this list, as the fifth item, we find the BhP: بھگبت ای باسدیو viz. *Bhagabat 'ay Bās(u)dēw*.[15] We may translate: 'the *Bhāgavata* [-*Purāṇa*, 'Bhagavat'] means Vāsudeva'.[16] This means that by AD 1030 the *purāṇa* had *in some form* already gained prestige as a *mahā-purāṇa*; it does not necessarily mean that certain passages could not have been added later.

The second source for a *terminus ad quem* is of a more dubious nature. It was Schrader[17] who drew attention to a quotation from the BhP in the *Bhagavadgītârthasaṅgraha* of Abhinavagupta (flourished *c.* AD 990-1015).[18] But Schrader himself, and van Buitenen[19] have expressed doubts about whether this quotation was made by Abhinavagupta or by a later hand,[20] though in view of Al-Bīrūnī's testimony a knowledge of the BhP in North India would not be impossible.[21]

The *terminus a quo* has been much more controversial;[22] but

[15] Sachau, line 10.

[16] Al-Bīrūnī did not recognize the long ā, unless the older name was simply *Bhagavat-Pu°*, parallel *Viṣṇu-Pu°*. The phrase 'means Vāsudeva' explains the title-word *Bhagavad-*, similar to the explanation of Nārada as 'a son of Brahmā'; 'Vāsudeva' is not, as van Buitenen (1966 p. 215 note 17) claims, 'a title that no longer survives'. The particle آی 'that means' is not 'alias' (van Buitenen) with reference to the full title, just as there could not be an alternative title for the *Nārada-Purāṇa*, *'son of Brahmā-Purāṇa'*.

[17] 1930, p. 7 with note 2.

[18] On page 594, *ad* BhG XIV, 8, some verses from the BhP are introduced *yathā vā Śrīmad-Bhāgavate*.

[19] Schrader, loc. cit., 'if authentical'; van Buitenen (1966, p. 216, note 18): 'doubt as to its authenticity is admissible'. But neither of these authors gives any reasons for their doubt.

[20] Pandey, 1963, pp. 909–42, lists 'Authorities referred to in the available works of Abhinava'; the BhP is not found there, not even for the *Gītā*-Commentary.

[21] Eidlitz, 1968, p. 175, note 1, claims that 'Rāmānuja' quotes the BhP. Although on merely chronological grounds (Rāmānuja 1017(?) — 1137) this would be possible, the work actually referred to, the *Vedāntatattvasāra* (ed. Bāṅke Vihāri Vājapeyi, Calcutta, 1878), in the first verse pays obeisance to Veṅkaṭanātha (1268–1368), and is by a later Śrīvaiṣṇava writer, a Rāmānujâcārya. Eidlitz refers also to a commentary on the *Uttaragītā* by a Gauḍapāda; but this can hardly be an authentic work (or an authentic quotation from the BhP) by Saṅkara's *parama-guru*.

[22] That it is thought to be a work by Vyāsa need not concern us here. Hazra's (quoted Hopkins, 1966, p. 4) earliest date (before AD 550) cannot claim any validity.

as we shall see in the following chapter, the bulk of the *purāṇa* must be later than the eighth century AD, because the work betrays knowledge of the poems of Nammāḻvār, Periyâḻvār, Āṇṭāḷ, and probably also of Kalikaṉṟi. Unfortunately my dating of the first three of these Āḻvārs rests on less firm grounds than one would wish, yet it is quite unlikely that these Āḻvārs, except Nammāḻvār, lived before the eighth century AD—the ninth century would be more likely. Thus the ninth or earlier tenth century will appear as the most reasonable date for the BhP. This would make Hacker's suggested date (eighth century)[23] which is obtained from a study of the *purāṇa's advaita* orientation, too early by at least one century.

5.22 *South Indian origin*

That the BhP originated in South India has been suggested by various authors,[24] but so far a definite proof has been lacking. In the following pages I shall discuss in detail the relationship between the *Kṛṣṇa-carita* (concentrating on the *gopī* episodes) of the BhP and songs of the Āḻvārs. This relationship would by itself suffice to suggest that this *purāṇa* was composed in the South. Since however numerous other details point to the same conclusion and throw light on the general environment of the BhP, I have collected them in Appendix XI, so that the reader can consult them as corroborative evidence. This evidence allows us to specify that the BhP is concerned with the Pāṇḍya kings and their kingdom, with Tamilness symbolized in the figure of Agastya, and with Southern Vaiṣṇava sages. This is borne out by three myths about Pāṇḍya kings, a version of Kṛṣṇa's bullfight which I believe to be

Most other scholars (see note 10 above) agree on the period between the ninth and late tenth century. A safe *terminus a quo* is provided by the ViP, although it is impossible to furnish absolute dates. Vaidya's (1925) arguments rest on the fact that Rādhā is not mentioned in the BhP!

[23] Hacker, 1959, pp. 121–8. In p. 127 note 2 he suggests for Śaṅkara AD 650–750; p. 127 he says about the date of the BhP: '*nicht lange nach dem Auftreten des großen* Śaṅkara' and p. 128 he speaks of the eighth century. Gail, 1969, pp. 12f manages to arrive at AD 750 as date for the BhP by ignoring Hacker's suggested date for Śaṅkara and dating the BhP *prior* to Śaṅkara.

[24] I refer to 1.5, literature mentioned in notes 130–41.

influenced by the *Kalittokai*, geographical descriptions, linguistic evidence, and the prophecy of the future saints of Tamilnadu.

5.23 *The Bhāgavata: an opus universale*

As we have already had ample opportunity to notice, the period from about the sixth to about the tenth century in the Tamil South is characterized by a very fertile and multifarious encounter between two cultures, Tamil and Sanskritic Hindu. The BhP is an attempt to harmonize the various complexes involved in this encounter and to resolve the tensions it had given rise to. Simplifying issues considerably, we can say: Northern culture orientated itself by a social system (the brahmins as the foremost *varṇa*) and an ideology (the Vedānta, viz. the systematization of the teaching of the *Upaniṣads*), while Southern culture was characterized by an emotional religion (of the Āḻvārs) and by great aesthetic sensibility (the old *caṅkam* poetry, and the *akattiṇai*). The BhP tries to integrate all four complexes, and it uses the symbol of the Vedas to achieve this, while adopting the purāṇic literary form. Thus, as authors have time and again pointed out, the BhP stands quite apart from other *purāṇas*—it is an *opus universale* attempting to encompass everything.

5.231 *Vedic Sanskrit*

The peculiar language which the BhP employs was noticed already by F. J. Meier, 1931,[25] while A. S. Biswas[26] has made a formal analysis of it, mainly by comparing it to Pāṇini. Meier was puzzled by it, while Biswas does not attempt any interpretation. Van Buitenen speaks of the archaisizing Sanskrit which employs Vedic morphology and semantics, as the 'unique tendency of the *Bhāgavata*, which is displayed with equal density throughout the text, irrespective of style or context'.[27] Making Yāmunâcārya's *Āgama-prāmāṇyam* (a defence of the orthodoxy of the Pāñcarātra) his standard of comparison, van Buitenen interprets the Vedic language of the BhP as an attempt to show that 'I am not only orthodox in

[25] 'Der Archaismus in der Sprache des Bhāgavata-Purāṇa', in: *Zeitschrift für Indologie und Iranistik*, vol. 8, 1931, pp. 33–79; referred to by van Buitenen. 1966, p. 24.

[26] 1968; it discusses the linguistic peculiarities verse by verse.

[27] 1966, p. 24.

the Vedic tradition, I even sound like the Veda'.[28] One can agree with van Buitenen's explanation, though it is not necessary to restrict the conflict to *smārta* brahmins versus the Pāñcarātra. As we have time and again seen in previous pages, the Vedas, as the symbol of Hindu, Northern culture, in challenging Southern sentiment did not force it into open opposition, but made it justify its own religious expressions in terms of the Vedas. Probably the earliest examples are the Tirumāl hymns of the *Paripāṭal*.[29] Then we hear Nammāḻvār saying that his songs are not his own, but Viṣṇu's words.[30] Madhurakavi provides an even more challenging interpretation: Nammāḻvār summarized the essentials of the Veda and expressed them in Tamil.[31] Veṅkaṭanātha elaborates further, by combining both statements: Viṣṇu incarnated himself in the Āḻvārs and 'summarizing those parts of the meanings of the Veda which are the most essential, he revealed them in a language accessible to all'.[32] The BhP claims to be 'the essence of the whole Vedānta'.[33] Its use of Vedic Sanskrit is unique, but its Vedicism is part of an overall Southern Vaiṣṇava preoccupation. It shows that a whole culture is struggling to preserve its identity by relating itself to the most powerful symbol with which the North has been challenging it: the Vedas.

5.232 *Lyric metres*

While the simple *śloka* is the typical metre of the traditional *purāṇas*, the BhP makes quite extensive use of longer lyric Sanskrit metres.[34]

[28] Ibid., p. 31.

[29] See pp. 207ff.

[30] TVM Vil, 9.

[31] See above Knct 8: 'he expounded the inner meaning of the Vedas which are difficult to understand'.

[32] *Rahasyatrayasāram*, p. 36: *(Vedârtha)ṅkaḷil vēṇṭum (sāratamâṃśa)ttai (sarva)rukkum (adhikar)ikkal āṉa (bhāṣ)aiyālē (saṅgrah)ittu kkāṭṭiyum*. See Appendix XI, 5.

[33] BhP XII, 13, 15: *sarva-vedânta-sāraṃ hi Śrī-Bhāgavatam iṣyate*. Compare I, 1, 1 which paraphrases *Vedāntasūtra* I, 1, 2, or BhP I, 1, 3: *nigama-kalpa-taror galitaṃ phalam* 'the fruit that has fallen from the *kalpa*-tree which is the *Vedas*'.

[34] Hohenberger, 1965, gives a complete list of metres used in the *mahāpurāṇa's* along with a full concordance. Those tables would seem to reduce the unique importance of lyric metres in the BhP. However, no other *purāṇa* uses the same variety of metres (BhP 31 different metres, p. 49), nor with anything like the density found in the BhP. Moreover, the chronological situation would require clarification; it could

The extent may be illustrated by the following table which lists the different metres used in the *gopī* passages discussed in 5.3:

TABLE XXVI

Vasantatilakam	53	
Vaṃśamālā	33	
Svāgatā/Drutapada	24	
Aparāntikā	18	
Mālinī	10	
Upajāti	6	
Mandākrānta	2	
Puṣpitāgra	1	
	147	: 225 ślokas

This is a remarkably high proportion of lyric metres; it shows beyond doubt that the BhP wants to be more than a simple epic narrative, viz. a *kāvya*. The motivation of this desire is twofold: the whole of earlier Tamil culture was greatly concerned with expressing religion in forms of art, and once Sanskrit was chosen, the canon of the *alaṅkāra-śāstras* determined what good poetry was to be. Thus the BhP, while expressing a very deep-rooted Southern predilection for poetry, at the same time tries to satisfy the Sanskrit *literati*. Secondly, as we shall see below, for some of the lyric passages we have a special rationale: the BhP wants to reproduce Āḻvār *songs*.

We may now turn to the BhP's attitude to the Northern social structure, and its ideological position, which is closely linked with that attitude, since 'the real brahmin' is defined in ideological terms.

5.233 *Attitudes towards brahminism*

Van Buitenen, after quoting from Yāmuna's *Āgamaprāmāṇyam*,[35]

---

well be that other *purāṇas* imitated the BhP and added such lyric passages (or rewrote older ones in lyric metres). The *Padma-Purāṇa*, the other *purāṇa* rivalling the BhP in its usage of such metres (though with less density or variety), contains, as has been mentioned above (p. 40) long passages which are *later* than the BhP.

[35] 1966, pp. 27–9; compare also on p. 32 the quotation from Bhāskara, who illustrates a most uncompromising attitude toward non-brahmins.

summarizes the sociological tension between the 'orthodox' brahmins and the Bhāgavatas (viz. Pāñcarātrins) as follows:

> As is clear from our lengthy quotation, the Bhāgavatas laid claim to being Brahmans; it is also clear that those who made the claim were the priests among the Bhāgavatas. The Smārtas vehemently disputed their claim, because Bhāgavatas/Sātvatas were traditionally (i.e. by *smṛti*) known to be very low class. . . And not only does the Bhāgavata stand condemned by his heredity but his lowliness is compounded by his sacerdotal occupation; priest to his idol he lives off his priesthood, and, whatever his social pretensions, he is a common *pūjāri*.[36]

Keeping in mind that the BhP is not a 'Pāñcarātra' work,[37] we may now look at its attitude to orthodox brahminism. T. J. Hopkins[38] and A. Gail[39] provide the relevant material. In principle, of course, the BhP conforms to the ideal of the four *varṇas*.[40] However, a second, and for the BhP more important, value-system is superimposed: the relative position in the *varṇa*-structure is not simply determined by an individual's birth, but by ethical factors (a conventional idea, expressed e.g. in the rules that govern each *varṇa*'s behaviour and to disobey which means to lose one's *varṇa*) which significantly are now identified with 'correct *bhakti* behaviour'. Consequently the *purāṇa* can say:

> I consider a Śvapaca [an outcaste] whose mind, speech, activity, purpose and life are fixed on the lotus feet of the Lotus-navelled One . . . to be better than a learned Brahman . . . who has turned away from His feet. The former purifies his caste, but the latter, whose pride is great, does not.[41]

Thus just as the BhP conforms to the Northern symbol, the Vedas, but preserves a Southern religious identity by claiming that Viṣṇuism and Viṣṇu *are* what the Vedas are essentially about, it conforms to the *varṇa*-system but redefines it as a scale of *bha-*

[36] 1966, p. 29.

[37] It emphasizes the importance of temple-worship (see Hopkins, 1966, pp. 9–11 for the relevant passages), but lacks the more characteristic conceptions of the *vyūhas* and *arcâvatāras* (see Gail, 1969, p. 8, Nos. 1, 4, 5).

[38] 1966, pp. 6–22, particularly pp. 16–8.

[39] 1969, particularly pp. 9, 76, 95–100.

[40] BhP VII, 11, 13–30; XI, 17, 16–21.

[41] BhP VII, 9, 9f (trans. Hopkins, 1966, p. 17). The same revaluation is exemplified by various stories, e.g., BhP X, 23 (brahmins refuse to give Kṛṣṇa food, but their wives serve him).

ktas, the ideal *bhakta* (even if by birth a Śvapaca, a 'dog-eater') being the highest category. We can relate this attitude to sources which have been discussed above. Toṇṭaraṭippoṭi, himself a '*pūjāri*', had said:

> You (=Viṣṇu) manifestly like those 'servants' who express their love for your feet, though they may be born as outcastes, more than the *Caturvedins* who are strangers and without allegiance to your service.[42]
>
> Though they may be brahmins by caste—who are the foremost among those belonging to you—...if they despise those who belong to you, in a moment they become like outcastes.[43]

Again, Madhurakavi had complained: 'those lords of the four Vedas regard [me] as vile.'[44]

Smārta brahmins, *Caturvedins*, etc., represent Hindu orthodoxy, against which the bhakti movement in its different forms (Āḻvārs, BhP, Pāñcarātra, Yāmuna) tries to defend itself, not by denying their *varṇa* superiority but by imposing a further condition on it: to be a true *bhakta* and accept other *bhaktas*.

But besides accepting the traditional *varṇa*-system with bhakti as the additional modifying factor, the author of the BhP also betrays a personal, unreflected inclination towards brahminism. We may compare, as an example of this attitude, PâḺTM I, 1, 8 with BhP X, 7, 4-17. Periyâḻvār only says: 'The cowherds derived great pleasure from performing the *uttāṉam*[45] ceremony for the baby [Kṛṣṇa].'[46] But the BhP (which calls the ceremony *aut-thānika*, v. 4f) turns it into a very elaborate Sanskritic-brahmin affair. Brahmin priests officiate at it, recite *mantras*, are greatly honoured with gifts; moreover, a *svastyayana* rite is performed by them, along with Vedic *sūktas*, and the author adds his praise of saintly brahmins and of the efficacy of their rituals. The way in which the simple sentence of Periyâḻvār is elaborated upon would

[42] TMāl 39, quoted 4.372 note 10.

[43] TMāl 43, quoted 4.372 note 12.

[44] Knct 4, quoted 4.373 note 21. By implication, they also despise Nammāḻvār and his TVM.

[45] This ceremony takes place twelve days after the birth of a child; *uttāṉam* < Skt. *utthāpanam* (for which the MTL mentions also the Tamil form *uttāpaṉam*); BhP X, 7, 4 calls it *autthānika*. The literal meaning ('causing to leave, e.g., a house') is applied to the taking of the baby out of the house into the daylight on that day.

[46] *Maintaṉai uttāṉañ ceytu ukantaṉar āyarē*.

strongly suggest that the author of BhP is personally a devoted follower of brahmin religion and accepts the claim that its representatives are superior beings.[47]

5.234 *Ideology*

In general terms it is quite clear that by the eighth century[48] Hinduism had developed its new ideological identity with the *pūrva-* and *uttara-mīmāṃsā*. For the next few centuries, Vedānta means *advaita*, and it is predictable that the BhP, trying to reconcile bhakti with brahmin orthodoxy, adopts an *advaita* position.[49] This distinguishes it form the ViP, which otherwise was its major source in the Sanskrit purāṇic tradition. In so far as it relates to our analysis, the ideological impact of *advaita* upon emotional bhakti will be analysed in 5.43. At this stage it will suffice to place the *advaita* position of the BhP in its Southern context.

Barring a detailed investigation, it may be said that there are practically no traces of *advaita* in the Āḻvārs. Indeed we have encountered passages that might not be in conformity with later Śrīvaiṣṇava doctrine,[50] but then one cannot expect vernacular poets fully to conform to standards formulated by theologians centuries later. But these same passages are not definitely *advaita* either; after all, both major traditions that determined the religion of the Āḻvārs preclude a strictly monistic or illusionistic philosophy: the BhG with its form of *yoga*, and down-to-earth Tamil humanism. One of the major concepts used in the *Prabandham* is that of *māyā* (Tamil *māyam* or *māyai*), but it means Kṛṣṇa's miraculous, elusive, fascinating, agonizing . . . nature experienced by the *bhakta*, and not 'illusion'. The philosophical tenets of Śaṅkara's *advaita* have their roots in areas of Indian thought other than the Āḻvārs' religion.

[47] For a discussion of attitudes towards *jāti* in later Śrī-Vaiṣṇavism see Hardy, 1978, Nos. 4.41; 4.44; 6.33; 7.3; 7.5.

[48] Kumārila's date is *c.* 600–650 (Frauwallner, 1956, p. 24), and that of Prabhākara, his disciple, somewhat later (ibid.). Hacker places Śaṅkara between AD 650 and 750 (1959, p. 127 note 2).

[49] The *advaita* philosophy of the BhP has been analysed by Hacker, 1959, pp. 121–8. Some remarks also in Gail, 1969. See note 56 below.

[50] See for example, TCV 10 and 120 quoted 4.374 notes 28f, or TVM V, 6, where the girl's words 'I myself have created the world . . .' would suggest a (psychological) monism between Kṛṣṇa and the *bhakta*; yet note the mother's remarks.

However, this is only one side of the situation; granted that Śaṅkara's major philosophical inspiration derives from sources like the *Brahmasūtras*, *Vijñānavāda*, etc., it still remains to trace his 'religion' to its sources. Hacker[51] who has analysed this question, arrives at a surprising but convincing result: Śaṅkara must have grown up in a Vaiṣṇava environment, since, unlike Śaivism, Vaiṣṇava conceptions and sentiments are still traceable in his (authentic—the evidence does not depend on his authorship of the spurious *Bhajagovindam*!) works.[52] Moreover, his disciples[53] show a similar leaning towards Vaiṣṇavism.[54] This does not mean that *they were* 'Vaiṣṇavas', but that Vaiṣṇavism, and not Śaivism provided the religious background on which they drew in constructing the philosophical superstructure of *advaita*. But it also means that a relationship between *advaita* and Vaiṣṇavism was not exclusive to the BhP.[55] We may have another testimony for an early form of theistic (= Vaiṣṇava) monism which the BhP illustrates, viz. Ādiśeṣa's *Paramârthasāram*. Stanza 1 may illustrate the type of *advaita*- Vaiṣṇavism professed by it:

[51] 1965b.

[52] Ibid., p. 148. In p. 152 he says, inter alia: 'Śaṅkara can . . use the term (*māyā*) to denote the miraculous power of Paramêśvara'. This refers to *BrSBhāṣya ad* I, 1, 20 (p. 80 in Thibaut, 1890).

[53] Ibid., p. 153: 'the *maṅgala* verses of his disciples as well as of almost all authors of early advaitism up to the end of the tenth century AD exhibit the same features as we found in the contents of Śaṅkara's SBh. There are no traces of association with Śaivism but several signs of proximity to Vaiṣṇavism.'

[54] More details can be derived from Hacker, 1950. Thus Sureśvara's *Naiṣkarmyasiddhi* IV, 76 (pp. 14, 71f), Padmapāda's *Pañcapādikā* III (pp. 23f), 'Toṭaka's' *Śrutisārasamuddharaṇa* 1 and 178f (pp. 32f), 'Hastâmalaka-ślokāḥ' 14 (pp. 33, 165f). Compare also Sureśvara's *Taittirīyôpaniṣadbhāṣyavārttikam* II, 374; 380 and III, 53. In all these stanzas, Viṣṇu is either the *iṣṭadevatā*, the *īśvara*, or almost identified with *brahman*.

[55] Śaṅkara's arguments *contra* the 'Bhāgavatas' in his *Bhāṣya ad* BrS II, 2, 42–5 are well known. They have variously been interpreted as *contra* the Vaiṣṇavas, or even theists in general. But as he clearly states (*ad* 42, Thibaut, 1890, p. 440) it is only the *vyūha* doctrine of the 'Bhāgavatas' he is opposed to. In other words, he attacks only the Pāñcarātrins *in senso stricto*; other forms of Vaiṣṇavism or Bhāgavatism (e.g., the Āḻvārs) *ergo* 'agree with the *Vedānta* system, and hence afford no matter for controversy' (ibid., p. 440). Rāmānuja (who numbers the *sūtras* 40–3) makes it equally clear that only the *Pāñcarātra* is attacked (Thibaut, 1904, pp. 523–31). He reacts against Śaṅkara *as a Pāñcarātrin*, and not (necessarily) as a Bhāgavata, Vaiṣṇava, or theist.

I resort for refuge to you alone, Viṣṇu, who transcend the highest form of *prakṛti*, who are without beginning; though the One, you abide in manifold caves of illusion, you the abode of the All, present in all that moves and does not move.[56]

This leads us to the final major complex which the BhP has attempted to integrate into the *opus universale* which it aims at presenting, viz. emotional bhakti. Since this will be discussed in detail in 5.41, we can restrict ourselves at this stage to a brief and general characterization of emotionalism as it occurs in the BhP.

5.235 *Emotional bhakti*

While Hacker[57] has discussed it in so far as it appears in the Prahlāda episode, and while we shall look in detail at the *gopī* stories, Hopkins[58] has drawn attention to some other passages. He states correctly:

> Such devotion represents a significant change from the *bhakti* of the *Bhagavad Gītā*. For the *bhakti* must be more than quiet contemplation; it must be a transfer to the Lord of all the emotion and desires that are ordinarily expended on the world and its pleasures. *Bhakti* without this emotional fervour cannot purify.

He qotes BhP XI, 14, 23f:

> Without the bristling of the hair of the body, without the mind dissolving, without being inarticulate because of tears of joy, without *bhakti*, how can the heart be purified? He whose voice is stammering, whose thought dissolves, who repeatedly weeps and sometimes laughs, who, shameless, sings and dances—such a person, attached by *bhakti* to me, purifies the world.

Gail quotes I, 6, 16-9 where Nārada illustrates these same ecstatic symptoms.[59]

We can immediately recognize many of the symptoms of mystical

[56] *Paraṃ parasyāḥ prakṛter anādim ekaṃ niviṣṭaṃ bahudhā guhāsu/sarvâlayaṃ sarva-carâcara-sthaṃ tvām eva Viṣṇuṃ śaraṇaṃ prapadye*. The commentator renders *guhā* by *māyā*. Prof. P. Hacker, in a personal communication, drew my attention to this work; he considers a South Indian origin not improbable. Abhinavagupta's work of the same title (for literature see Gonda, 1963, p. 225, with note 11) is a later version of it, as he acknowledges in the opening stanzas.

[57] See above pp. 39f.

[58] 1966, p. 9.

[59] 1969, p. 93. Other passages are quoted on pp. 94f: BhP X, 38, 34 (Uddhava), V, 7, 12 (king Bharata), or II, 3, 24 (general).

ecstasy which we have encountered so frequently with the Āḻvārs. Moreover, fairly late Āḻvārs (Periyâḻvār and Tiruppāṇ) displayed this type of bhakti in contexts that made no reference to a girl or *gopī* framework,[60] which in Nammāḻvār or Parakālaṉ was fairly directly involved in their emotional bhakti. The BhP represents the same situation: basically, ecstatic mysticism has become emancipated from the 'girl' or the *gopī* (though naturally, as we shall see, it occurs with the *gopīs* too).

This is the most critical point in the BhP: on the one hand emotional bhakti represents the typical Tamil heritage in Southern Vaiṣṇavism, while on the other hand it would appear to be the most difficult complex to reconcile with Vedānta ideology, particularly in its *advaita* form. In 5.43 we shall discuss the way in which bhakti is related to *advaita* in the *gopī* story.

5.3 Textual observations

5.31 *The* gopī *story and its relation to the ViP*

5.311 *Introduction*

Fortunately, the question of which purāṇic sources the BhP utilized can be answered without difficulty. Ruben[61] has shown for the *Kṛṣṇa-carita* (Books X and XI) that only the ViP[62] was the model for the BhP, just as Hacker[63] has arrived at the same result for the Prahlāda episode (Book VII). From our previous discussion of the version of the *gopī* episodes in the ViP,[64] we can turn to the version found in the BhP:[65] borrowings and innovations can easily be recognized.

As we have seen, the Br/ViP version is quite original compared

[60] See above pp. 405.434ff

[61] 1944, pp. 270f.

[62] Though Ruben thinks it possible that PaP VI may be earlier; but see p. 40 above.

[63] 1959, pp. 98, 224.

[64] See 2.4; a simple Arabic figure after ViP refers to the numbering of verses belonging to that *purāṇa*'s *gopī* episodes which is used in 2.41. That the BhP follows the ViP, and not the shorter BrP version, can be seen *inter alia* from the fact that the BhP elaborates on the three passages 1* to 3* of the ViP.

[65] The version is too long to be translated in full; only extracts can be given here.

with its source, the Hv; what appears in the latter work as a most fragmentary and elusive account was rendered into a coherent narrative by the Br/ViP. The BhP does not alter *this* part significantly: it follows it faithfully, and is original only in that it rewrites every verse and elaborates on it. But the Br/ViP version accounts for only the central part of the *gopī* narrative. The BhP has a considerable amount of material in earlier or later parts of Book X which is quite original. All this means that corresponding to the 80 *ślokas* in the ViP (only 64 in the BrP, Hv only 21) the BhP deals in more than 350 stanzas (150 of which are in longer lyric metres) with the *gopīs*. We find here a number of songs, a treatment of the *gopīs*' love with all the sensuality and paraphernalia of Sanskrit love poetry, new episodes, and a considerably extended reflection on the religious significance of their love.

Before we enter into the details, a table may illustrate in general terms the relation to the ViP version and the original portions in the BhP.

TABLE XXVII

	Bh P X, chapter:	ViP
1st song of the *gopīs*	21	
vastraharaṇa episode	22	
Kṛṣṇa meets the *gopīs*	29	1 –11a
the girls imitate him	30a	11b–16
follow him	30b	17 –29
4th song of the *gopīs*	31	
Kṛṣṇa returns	32	30 –34
the *rāsa* dance	33a	35 –44
conclusion	33b	45 –49
5th song of the *gopīs*	35	
girls lament over Kṛṣṇa's departure for Mathurā	39	50 –70
Uddhava's visit	47	
Balarāma's visit	65	71 –80
Kṛṣṇa meets the *gopīs* in Kurukṣetra	82	

The table ignores smaller passages in other chapters of the BhP,

and original material inserted in related passages (for example, in chapter 29, 31-41 constitute an original second song of the *gopīs*).

The table shows clearly that chapters 21f, 31, 35, 47, 82 present new material which is not derived from the ViP. Chapters 29-33 are known as the *rāsapañcâdhyāyam* 'the five chapters on the *rāsa*'; except for 31, they constitute the common core of ViP and BhP. The BhP has added chapters 21 and 35, two songs closely related in content, as a kind of frame to those chapters, and connects the *vastraharaṇa* episode (not mentioned in the ViP) with the introductory song (chapter 21). Chapter 47, inspired in fact by ViP 71-80, contains again a new episode: Uddhava (the 'Arjuna' of the BhP, see below) visits the *gopīs* and discourses to them on love; Balarāma (who did this in the ViP) is then only briefly dealt with. Finally, when the armies arive in Kurukṣetra for the Mahābhārata battle, the BhP does not miss the opportunity to have Kṛṣṇa meet not just his tribesmen, the *gopas*,[66] but also the *gopīs*, and explain to them once more the nature of their love for him.

5.312 *Sequence of seasons, Chapters 21f*

Both the Hv and Br/ViP let Kṛṣṇa's affairs with the *gopīs* begin in *autumn* (ViP V, chapter 13), immediately after the heavy *rains* caused by Indra. On the other hand, a description of the *rainy season* is given in chapter 6, and that of *autumn* in chapter 10. The BhP shows a much more complicated situation. While chapters 17-19 deal with the summer season, 20 turns to the following seasons, the *rains* and then *autumn*; thus ViP chapters 6 and 10 are combined in one consecutive description. Again, 21 is set in *autumn*: the *gopīs* hear Kṛṣṇa play his flute in the forest, and the whole world becomes entranced by him. It is this song that introduces the erotic fascination of Kṛṣṇa, and motivates the *gopīs*' infatuation by relating it to a universal reaction in all beings.

Theoretically, the BhP could have continued with the Govardhana episode and then the beginning of the *amours*, both taking place in *autumn*. But instead, the BhP adds 22: the *gopīs*, now definitely in love with Kṛṣṇa, perform a rite in order to obtain Kṛṣṇa as their husband; Kṛṣṇa snatches away their clothes, and

[66] As far as I can gather from Sørensen, the MBh does not mention the *gopas* on Kurukṣetra; thus the BhP integrates the purāṇic and epic Kṛṣṇa, as is already clear from the fact that it includes a summary of the MBh.

once convinced of their eager love, he promises: 'You will enjoy these nights with me' (22, 27). Thus this incident follows naturally from chapter 21, and leads logically on to chapter 29. However, there is one problem: the rite of the girls takes place 'in winter, during its first month' (22, 1).[67] On the one hand, *hemanta* follows *autumn*, and thus this is natural (21 → 22); on the other hand, according to the ViP Kṛṣṇa begins his sport (and thus fulfils the promise he made to the girls) in *autumn*. Thus the BhP does the only possible thing: it turns to other events, lets a year pass, and only in the *following autumn* resumes the *gopī* story. BhP 22, 29-38 describe *summer*; at the end of the *rains*, the *gopas* want to celebrate Indra's festival (24). But since Kṛṣṇa was opposed to it, the enraged Indra does not let the rain stop, and Kṛṣṇa protects the *gopas* and the cattle by holding the mountain Govardhana as an umbrella over them (25). The cowherds are amazed by his miraculous nature (26, expanding ViP V, 13, 1-13), which the BhP logically elaborates upon by having Indra praise him (27) and by showing his superiority also over Varuṇa (28). With 29, the BhP resumes the line of the ViP; verses 29, 1-3 correspond even verbally very closely to ViP V, 13, 14-15. It is *autumn* again.

The rationale for the whole rearrangement in BhP quite clearly depends on 22, 1—the incident takes place in *winter*; obviously the BhP was faithful to the source from which it derived the *vastraharaṇa* episode, just as it remained faithful to the ViP (by letting the *rāsa* begin in *autumn)*. When we see below[68] that 22 in fact derives from the TPā combined with NTM I, which refer to *mārkaḻi* and *tai* (which as *mārgaśīrṣa* and *taiṣa* define *hemanta* in Skt.), we can understand why the BhP insisted on the rearrangement which became necessary because of *hemanta*.

Faithful as the BhP is to its sources, we cannot expect one other transformation which the South Indian tradition would have suggested: to let the *gopī* episodes take place in the *rainy season*, as the Āḻvārs in fact do. But if we assume that the BhP did not want altogether to abandon the associations of that season, we can in fact explain some other features which the above comparison with the ViP has revealed. In the ViP, the description of the rainy season is separated by six chapters from the *gopī* episodes, while in the

[67] *Hemante prathame māsi.*

[68] See 5.321

Vastraharaṇa episode, relief on a pillar in the Varadarāja temple, Kāñcīpuram.

BhP it is given (in 20a) immediately before the first song of the *gopīs* (21), with only the description of autumn intervening. In that song itself, verse 16, the rain-clouds are mentioned; while they are natural in the Govardhana incident, in 29, 1 we hear that the *mallikā* (~*mullai*!) are blossoming.

The situation as explained so far may be summarized in the following Table XXVIII:

TABLE XXVIII

ViP, V, chapter		BhP, X, chapter	
9	Pralambhâsura	11	
		17–19	*summer* episodes
6	description of *rains*	20a	
10a	of the *autumn*	20b	
		21	1st song, in *autumn*
			v. 16: rain-clouds
		22	*vastraharaṇa*, in *winter*
			vv. 29–38 *summer*
10b 11	Indra festival, Govardhana	24.25	
13, 1–13	amazement of *gopas*	26	end of *rains*, *autumn*
12	Indra's eulogy	27	
		28	Varuṇa
13, 14ff	beginning of *rāsa*	29,	1 . . . v. 1: *mallikā*

However confusing the BhP version might appear at first glance, it is a very rational exposition which results in a logical narrative (21 motivates 22, 22 motivates 29) and preserves the natural sequence of the seasons, and nevertheless reconciles the data of the sources, viz. of the ViP and of the Āḻvārs. The treatment of the 'rainy season' (as poetic theme) is rather subdued, indicating hardly more than that the author himself was familiar with its poetic significance in the Āḻvārs; it does not, as could hardly be expected, represent an attempt creatively to render the *akattiṇai* in Sanskrit poetry.

5.313 *rāsapañcádhyāyam, Chapters 29–33*

Chapter 29 begins the *rāsapañcâdhyāyam* (29-33), which derives from ViP 1-49. When Kṛṣṇa has decided to make love to the *gopīs*

he sings, and the girls come to him. ViP 4 simply says *tvaritāḥ* 'hastily'; BhP 29, 5-8 elaborate on this (8 -ViP 46, would have contradicted BhP 33, 30-8 as a general statement, and is thus applied here to one concrete incident). One *gopī*, unable to come, meditates on Kṛṣṇa and reaches *mukti* (29, 9–11 -ViP 7–9). The BhP takes the opportunity to discuss briefly the theological implications of this (12-6). Kṛṣṇa then greets the *gopīs*, praising the lovely night, and lectures them on *dharma* (17-28)! The passage is probably inspired by two phrases in ViP: 10b 'he paid due honour to the night' and 6b '. . . without any shame'. The BhP must have felt that 'without shame' could not be accepted without a proper investigation of its ethical implications. But the *gopīs* convince Kṛṣṇa that their love for him transcends all other considerations (29–41; 31–41 is the second song of the *gopīs*). He thus begins his dalliance with them, which is more elaborately described (42–8) than in the ViP (10. 11a). While the ViP, 11b, quite unexpectedly just says: 'when Kṛṣṇa had gone to another place', the BhP motivates his departure more clearly: because of his love and attention, each *gopī* began to feel very proud, and Kṛṣṇa decides to conceal himself to remove their pride (47f).

When they find themselves without Kṛṣṇa, they try to recall him by imitating his various manners, gestures, and miracles. ViP 12-5 (=2*) describes these miniature plays in some detail, while the girls roam through the forest (16, to discover his footprints, 17/18). The BhP may have felt that further elaboration was unnecessary; summarizing their behaviour in four verses (30, 1–4) it turns to a more original theme: the *gopīs* address various trees, enquiring whether they have seen Kṛṣṇa (5–13, the third song). Then suddenly a *gopī* discovers Kṛṣṇa's footprint on the ground, unmistakably His because of the marks of the banner, lotus, etc. (24f).[69] As in ViP 18–29 (=3*), the *gopīs* reconstruct from the footprints whole episodes (26–42). There are differences, however: in the ViP version Kṛṣṇa has just 'gone to another place' and thus the footprints reveal him as flirting, dallying, etc., with

[69] Vv. 14–23 are probably a later interpolation (all *ślokas*); 2–4 (in *vaṃśamālā*) summarize their imitations, and 4b says: '. . .enquired with the trees'. 5–13 (9–12 in *vasantatilaka*) contain these addresses to the trees; 24 would be the natural continuation: 'having thus enquired after Kṛṣṇa from the trees'. Whoever inserted 14–23 must have felt that ViP 2* deserved a fuller treatment than that given in vv. 2–4.

many different *gopīs*. Only accidentally do we hear in ViP 23 that he had left one *gopī* because she felt proud of his giving her a flower (from this the BhP adopted the motivation of Kṛṣṇa's disappearance in 29, 47f). But the BhP has Kṛṣṇa walk with only *one gopī* 'by whom Hari must have been worshipped'.[70] Various authors have drawn attention to this phrase and have suggested that *ārādhita* is an allusion to Kṛṣṇa's favourite Rādhā. This is possible; the BhP clearly alters its source to speak of only *one gopī*; on the other hand, we could argue that the BhP refrained from explicitly naming her Rādhā, since neither the ViP nor the Tamil sources mention the name.[71] With 33, the words of the *gopīs* conclude, and after a descriptive verse 34[72] the BhP turns to telling us about that one fortunate *gopī*, and why Kṛṣṇa left her: she pretended to be tired and in her pride wanted Kṛṣṇa to carry her on his back. Finally she meets her friends, and all return home in the evening, feeling very depressed (36–42). Thus unlike the ViP (29f), where the *gopīs* meet Kṛṣṇa again when they have returned to the Yamunā, the BhP has them spend a lonely night. Chapter 31 shows us why this alteration was made: it is the fourth song of the *gopīs*: they spend the following day in loneliness in their village, waiting for Kṛṣṇa to return in the evening with the cows, and worrying about his tender feet that might get hurt in the forest.[73] Finally Kṛṣṇa arrives, to be passionately greeted by the girls (32, 1–6 ViP 30–4, and incorporating 5f). But since according to the ViP the reunion, immediately followed by the *rāsa*, takes place on the bank of the Yamunā, the BhP makes Kṛṣṇa now take the girls from the village back to the river (32, 11f). Yet the *rāsa* does not begin, for the girls

[70] 30, 28: *anayârādhito nūnaṃ Bhagavān Harir*.

[71] In BhP 30, 33 we read: *keśa-prasādhanaṃ...kṛtaṃ tāni* (viz. flowers) *cūḍayatā kāntām* 'by fastening those (flowers) like a crest on his beloved's head he made her a "hair-do"'. Is this a parallel allusion to 'Nappinnai', the popular etymology of whose name is 'she with the beautiful hair'? Compare TPā 19: *kōttu alar pū kulal Nappinnai* 'Nappinnai with the lovely hair into which flowers are tied'. I think this allusion is as, or as little, convincing as that to Rādhā; for see ViP 22.

[72] BhP 30, 35 must have been added by a later hand: 'he sported with her . . . thereby showing the misery of people in love and the wickedness of women. . .' *reme tayā . . . kāminām darśayan dainyaṃ strīṇāṃ caiva durātmatām*. The BhP, which makes the *gopīs* the highest ideal of bhakti, can hardly be considered responsible for such a wise-cracking statement.

[73] It might be that ViP 29 'they sang his *carita*' stimulated the BhP to exemplify this by a song.

begin to scold him for his heartless behaviour (16), to which criticism Kṛṣṇa is forced to reply (17–22); in the final analysis, their love, he says, is its own reward (22).

However, now the *rāsa* dance can begin. BhP 33, 1–22 closely follows ViP 35–44, though it differs in two points from its model. Firstly, the ViP still mentions only a *natural* trick of Kṛṣṇa to bring the girls together in a circle: he has them close their eyes, and hold hands, while they *think* the hand to be Kṛṣṇa's (ViP 36f). The BhP offers a *supernatural* explanation: Kṛṣṇa divides himself into as many Kṛṣṇas as there are *gopīs* so that each girl can hold his hand (BhP 33, 3f, more clearly 20). Secondly, ViP 38f mention songs about *autumn* sung during the *rāsa*, but BhP ignores this; instead BhP 33, 8 alludes to the *rainy season* by comparing the *gopīs* (who are now clearly 'fair' ! see also verse 7) in the middle of all the Kṛṣṇas, to lightnings in rain-clouds.[74] In verse 11, a *gopī* is adorned with *mallikās*[75]—somebody familiar with the *akattiṇai* would have sensed separation approaching. BhP 33, 23–6 (ViP 45) add a brief description of Kṛṣṇa and the *gopīs* relaxing after the dance in the river Yamunā; 26 concludes the whole passage, along with a reference back to 22, 27, Kṛṣṇa's promise. While ViP 47–9 offer only a most lapidary theological interpretation, the BhP takes this up in greater detail, 33, 27–40. The following table may summarize the situation as discussed here.

TABLE XXIX

BhP X, chapter:		ViP:
29,	1–3a K. decides to make love	1.2
	3b–4 he sings, and the g. come	3.4
	5–8 their haste	(4: *tvaritāḥ*)
	8 ('though held back...')	46
	9–11 a g. meditates, finds *mukti*	7–9 (8* 9*)
	12–6 1st theological discourse: *mukti* through *tanmayatva*	
	17–28 K. greets g., praises night, lectures on *dharma*.	10b: honoured night 6b?: without shame
	29f g. beg for K.'s love	
	31–41 2nd song of g.	
	42–6 K. dallies with them	10.11a

[74] *Taḍita iva tā megha-cakre virejuḥ*. But compare ViP 42.
[75] *Ślathad-valaya-mallikā*.

47f	K. conceals himself, g. proud	11b: gone to another place. 23: conceals himself because of pride
30, 1–4a	g. think of K., imitate him	11b–16 (12*–15*)
4b–13	3rd song of g., to trees	
[14–23	a more elaborate description of the imitations]	
24f	g. discover footprints	17/18, 19
26–34	infer his flirting	19–29 (18*–28*)
[35	'wickedness of women']	
36–42	favourite abandoned	(23)
31, 1–19	4th song of the g. during day	(?29: sang his *carita*)
32, 1–10	K. returns, is greeted	30–4, incorporating 5f
11–22	K. takes g. back to Yamunā, defends himself	
33, 1–3	K. begins the *rāsa*	35
4–22	description of dancing	36–44
23–5	K. sports with g. in the river, spends night with them	45f
26	conclusion → 22, 27.	
27–38	2nd theological discourse: K. transcends *dharma*, indwells all as *ātman*, *māyā*-wives	47–9
39	g. go home in morning	
40	*śrutiphala*.	

I think we can conclude that the whole passage can be fully explained in its rationale and arrangement from the ViP; wherever new material is added, we find definite stimuli in the original ViP. On the other hand, some of the innovations appear in a well-defined *form*—the songs—which cannot be derived from the ViP. As we shall see below, it is here that the BhP utilizes Āḻvār songs.

5.314 *Chapters 34f*

The BhP felt that after this sensual pleasure of the *gopīs* with Kṛṣṇa the break in the ViP with 49 (to be resumed only after five chapters, with ViP V, 18, 12. . . = 50) was too abrupt. Thus in 34, 19–24 it again refers briefly to the *gopīs* roaming through the forest and making merry with Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma. Then in chapter 35 we have the fifth song of the *gopīs*. 34, 25–34 describes an episode in which the *gopīs* are attacked by Śaṅkhacūḍa, a

servant of Kubera, and are rescued by Kṛṣṇa; thus 35, 1 follows naturally: on occasions when Kṛṣṇa had gone alone into the forest without the *gopīs*, the girls' 'minds would run after him, . . . and they spent the days in suffering'.[76] Just as the first song of the *gopīs* (chapter 21) served to motivate the following events, the present song shows that the ravishing union with Kṛṣṇa (chapter 33) or even his pleasant company (chapter 34, 19–24) cannot last forever. Kṛṣṇa is in the forest, infatuating once again the whole universe with the music of his flute, while the *gopīs* in their homes can do nothing but *think* of him. This is precisely what the intention of the BhP is: to lead from the physical contact with Kṛṣṇa to a deeper dimension of contact, 'their thoughts on Him, their minds on Him, they found pleasure during the days'.[77] A link with the first song, viz. with the time when the *gopīs* were in a similar situation before their love found fulfilment, is constructed by means of the almost identical content of the songs: for seven common items (cows, rivers, clouds, birds, trees, deer, and celestial women) the infatuating influence of Kṛṣṇa's flute is described in both songs, though in 21 it evokes hope and in 35 memories, along with the longing for his return in the evening.

5.315 *Chapter 39*

The BhP continues to follow the sequence of events as described in the ViP: Ariṣṭa X, 36a (ViP chapter 14), Kaṃsa sends Akrūra 36b (ViP chapter 15), Keśī 37 (ViP chapter 16), and Akrūra's arrival in Vraja 38; 39, 1–12 (ViP chapters 17; 18, 1–11). In BhP 39, 13–8 (~ViP 50f) we hear of the *gopīs*' reaction to the news that Kṛṣṇa is to leave for Mathurā; here further details are given: some die, some faint, and some remember him and sing the sixth song, in which they lament about their misfortune (19–30). Unlike the other songs we have encountered so far, this one is clearly inspired by the ViP (52–67). Particularly ViP 57, 60, 66f correspond closely to BhP 39, 26f, 28, 19, 22 respectively. However, the BhP describes the departure in greater detail; Kṛṣṇa tries to console

[76] 35, 1: *tam anudruta-cetasaḥ . . . ninyur duḥkhena vāsarān.*

[77] 35, 26: *remire 'haḥsu tac-cittās tan-manaskāḥ.* The result of this attitude is to be *ātmârāma* 'whose pleasure-garden is the *ātman*' (about Śuka I, 7, 9; Priyavrata V, 1, 1; etc.) For details see below 5.4.

the *gopīs* 'with affectionate messages saying "I shall come (back)".'[78] BhP 39, 32 and 36 correspond closely to ViP 68f.

5.316 *Chapter 47*

After the narration of the events in Mathurā, the ViP relates in chapter 24 Balārama's visit to Vraja; the BhP deals with it in chapter 65, but introduces already in chapter 47 a similar episode which is modelled upon Balarāma's visit: Kṛṣṇa's friend Uddhava is sent to Vraja to console the *gopīs*. In BhP 46, 2–6 Kṛṣṇa speaks to his 'dear friend' (v.1) Uddhava about the cowherd girls' great love; this Uddhava is conceived of by the BhP as similar to Arjuna, as we see in BhP XI, 6–29, a passage imitating the *Gītā* and addressed to Uddhava. Chapter 47 relates his meeting with the *gopīs*, but unfortunately the text appears in a rather confused state; it looks as if various palm-leaves with small portions of the chapter had got mixed up. Two passages do not seem to belong to this context at all: vv, 11–21, the seventh song of the *gopīs*, is addressed to a *bee* which they take to be Kṛṣṇa's messenger, and bears no relation to Uddhava; 59–64 is a song by Uddhava in praise of the *gopīs* (referring to them in the third person). But even the various remaining portions do not link up.[79] The following table can be regarded only as a tentative rearrangement.[80]

If nothing else, this rearrangement at least shows something like a logical sequence of the narrative and a meaningful connection between the content of the various speeches and their introductory and concluding stanzas. Yet this still leaves the two songs unexplained: 12–21 with its introduction 11, and 53–63.

[78] 39, 35: *sāntvayāmāsa sa-premair āyāsya iti dautyakaiḥ*. Indeed a peculiar sentence, since Kṛṣṇa will never return to Vraja. Moreover, to speak of messages (*dautyaka*) when Kṛṣṇa is actually speaking to the *gopīs* is weird.

[79] Here are some of the inconsistencies. In v. 3 'they asked him', but in the following vv. 4–8 spoken by the girls, not a single question occurs. The following vv. 9f not only have no finite verb, but say that the *gopīs* '*in this manner* had their minds fixed on Kṛṣṇa' (which again hardly corresponds to vv. 4–8). The interpolated song vv. 11–21 is addressed to a bee, but v. 22 states that 'Uddhava had heard it'. Either 38 or 53 should continue after 37 (end of Uddhava's message), since both make reference to the content of 29–37. The intervening vv. 39–52 again do not fit in. V. 57 unexpectedly mentions that Uddhava realized the girls' perturbation, and 'he sang to them'—58–63 praise them, but in the third person.

[80] Note that in Burnouf's text our 30 appears as 29a/30a, etc., since 29b is not found in other editions.

TABLE XXX

BhP 47		Parallels
1–3	Curious to find out who Uddhava is, the g. approach him; learning that he is K.'s messenger, they ask him:	(ViP 79)
39–52	(Is it not that K. is now the towns-women's favourite? Does he remember his love-making with us? Will he return? What could attract him back to us!	BhP X, 65, 9 ViP 71b, 72, 73, 74, 75, 76, 77, 78 BhP 65, 10–4
	But we cannot forget him, and we still hope.)	(BhP 46, 17f, 20f)
57	'Seeing the agitation in the g.'s *ātmans* which K. possessed, U. sang:	
23–7	(You are fortunate since you show the highest bhakti; 'because of your separation, you are attached to K. with your whole *ātman*.')	BhP X, 46, 3–6
38?	'The g., hearing this, were pleased and spoke to U., who had been instructed by their most beloved, remembering that he had come with a message:	
4–8	(You have come here as K.'s servant, for he wants to please his parents. But for us he does not seem to care any more, for 'prostitutes abandon their lovers who have run out of money.'	ViP 78
22	'Uddhava, after listening, comforted through messages them who in that manner were eager to see K., and said this to the g.:'	ViP 80 BhP 65, 16
28	'"May you listen to the message of your lover,... along with which I have come here..."'	
29–37	'There is absolutely no separation of you from me who am the *ātman* of all...When you fix your whole mind that has ceased to function altogether, on me,..you will presently reach me.'	BhP 82, 45f
53	'Then, when their fever of separation had been extinguished by K.'s message, they realised K. to be their *ātman*...'	
?9f	'In this manner the *gopīs* had their speech, body, and mind upon Govinda,...singing about the deeds of their beloved...when U. had come to Vraja.'	BhP 65, 15
54–6; 64	U. stays in Vraja for some months, singing the stories of the *Kṛṣṇa-līlā*, and making people remember K. Then he says farewell and returns to Mathurā.	

The seventh song of the *gopīs* is introduced: 'A (*gopī*) who was meditating on her union with Kṛṣṇa [formerly], saw a bee, and imagining it to be a messenger sent by Kṛṣṇa, she spoke thus...'

(v. 11).[81] The song starts on an angry note and the girl scolds Kṛṣṇa via the bee for his ruthless, unfaithful behaviour.[82] She tells it to go away and hum before Kṛṣṇa's new favourite women; then she cites various mythical incidents (killing of Vāli, disfiguring of Śūrpaṇakhā, cheating of Bali). Even so, she cannot forget him, and cannot avoid asking about Kṛṣṇa: does he remember me? will he come back? It is a song (all the stanzas are in *mālinī*) which certainly looks authentic to me, for the very fact that it is totally out of context speaks against an interpolation, and it possesses all the characteristics of the other songs. I would suggest that in the general mixing-up of palm-leaves its original context (possibly in chapter 46) was not recognized, and whoever tried to sort out the confusion put it in chapter 47 for no other reason than that it also deals with a 'messenger'.

Uddhava's song, which is of less importance to our present study, may be assumed to have suffered a similar fate. Chapter 47, after v. 69, could well have been its original place: 'He (= Uddhava) fell down before Kṛṣṇa and spoke about the singular bhakti of the people of Vraja...'[83] Vv. 58-63, praising the singular bhakti of the *gopīs*, could well have followed.

Chapter 47 is inspired by ViP 71–80 (note the parallels in table XXX), but Uddhava, as Kṛṣṇa's intimate friend, was felt to be a more appropriate messenger than the drunken Balarāma (see Chapter 65). The words of the *gopīs* are derived from the ViP, while Uddhava's praise (23–7) and Kṛṣṇa's message (29–37) belong to the set of theological interpretations of bhakti and its realization through the *gopīs* (see the parallels).

5.317 *Chapter 65*

In spite of chapter 47, the BhP, remaining faithful to the ViP as its source, relates in chapter 65 Balarāma's visit to Vraja (ViP chapter 24). The *gopīs* approach him (v. 9) and ask about Kṛṣṇa (v. 10-

[81] *Kācin madhukaraṃ dṛṣṭvā dhyāyantī Kṛṣṇa-saṅgamam/priya-prasthāpitaṃ dūtaṃ kalpayitvêdam abravīt//*

[82] While a bee in Nammāḻvār's etc. messenger poems is a *poetic* symbol, the BhP tries to *explain* its significance intellectually: see v. 11, and the first stanza of the song (v. 12) where the bee and Kṛṣna are connected through *śleṣa*: *madhupa*—Madhupati; the whole stanza can thus be read either as addressed to the bee or to Kṛṣṇa.

[83] *Kṛṣṇāya praṇipatyâha bhakty-udrekaṃ Vrajâukasām.*

ViP 72, 11~76, 12~78, 14~75—compare BhP chapter 47, 39-52 and 4–8). They remember him (compare BhP chapter 47, 9f) and weep; but Balarāma consoles them with messages (vv. 15f~ViP80) which are not reproduced. It is clear that after chapter 47 there was no scope to do more with ViP 71–80 than to rewrite it.

5.318 *Chapter 82*

Kṛṣṇa never returns to Vraja. But before the MBh battle he meets some of the *gopas* in Kurukṣetra, including some *gopīs* (chapter 82). They embrace him in great ecstasy (vv. 14f). The BhP does not miss the opportunity to have Kṛṣṇa give once more a lecture to them about the nature of bhakti and of himself (vv. 39–46), and in their reply (vv. 47f), praising him, they show that they have understood the lesson: 'May your lotus-feet, that hang down to raise those fallen into the well of *saṃsāra*, rise up always in the minds of us who are attached to [our] homes.'[84]

5.319 *Other references to the* gopīs

This concludes the actual *gopī*-story as narrated in the BhP. However, in a number of places further reference is made to the *gopīs*; like BhP 47, 59–64, these references reflect on the mystical significance of their love for Kṛṣṇa. Three passages will be included in our discussion.[85] (1) When Kṛṣṇa is entering the town of Mathurā, the women watching him praise the *gopīs* (chapter 44, 13–6). (2) In chapter 46, 1–6, Kṛṣṇa speaks to Uddhava about the singular love of the *gopīs*. (3) In Book XI, chapter 6, 39 to 29, 49, constitutes a long discourse which is modelled on the *Gītā*. In chapter 12, 1-15, Kṛṣṇa points out to Uddhava why the *gopīs* are the highest among all *bhaktas*. These passages, along with the remarks found in the actual *gopī*-story, tell us about the BhP's interpretation of the *gopī*-myth. But before we can turn to analysing this, we must review the material presented above and trace to their possible origins those features which are *not* derived from the ViP.

[84] V. 48: *te padâravindam . . . saṃsāra-kūpa-patitôttaraṇâvalambaṃ gehaṃ juṣām api manasy udiyāt sadā naḥ||*

[85] See 5.4 below.

5.32 *The* gopī-*story (and other passages) in relation to the Ālvārs*

The textual observations made so far have allowed us to eliminate three portions as later interpolations: 30, 35; 47, 30b (only in Burnouf); and 30, 14–23. This last passage is not of importance to us since it is clearly derived from ViP 12–15.[86] Secondly, an attempt was made to reconstruct the original sequence of chapter 47; two portions (11–21 and 58–63) were seen to be out of place (regardless of whether the actual or the reconstructed sequence of verses is considered), but there are no indications that they are interpolations—most likely they are genuine passages from neighbouring contexts (chapters 46 and 47, 69) which were affected by the mix-up of manuscript leaves. Thirdly, the comparison with ViP revealed distinct innovations in the BhP. Many of them are simply elaborations on the narrative (e.g., 33, 23ff), usually stimulated by a cue in ViP, or theological reflections (e.g. 29. 12–6), or parallel extensions (like Uddhava's visit parallel to Balarāma's, ViP 71–80). All these features are omnipresent in the history of purāṇic literature. However, certain passages remain which cannot be explained in this manner and which show a distinctive character of their own: chapter 22, and the various 'songs of the *gopīs*', except the sixth song (39, 19–30) which derives from ViP 52–67. These passages are added to the narrative by no means merely externally; they must not be regarded as interpolations. The very elaborate rearrangement of chapter 20–29 (compared with the ViP source) depends for its whole rationale upon 22, v. 1. Similarly, while ViP 29 → 30 shows the simplest sequence of events (the girls return from the forest and meet Kṛṣṇa on the bank of the Yamunā, to start the *rāsa*), the BhP again rearranges and makes the events much more complicated (30, 42: the girls return to the village, where during the next day(s) they sing 31, and where, in 32, 1, Kṛṣṇa arrives; 32, 11f he takes them back to the Yamunā to begin the *rāsa*), clearly in order to create a situation in which the fourth song could be sung. Thus the new material was so important for the BhP that it was prepared to alter the line of narrative found in its source, otherwise so faithfully followed.

Now it is not difficult to show the source of inspiration for this

[86] It probably is just a coincidence that both BhP 30, 14–23 and ViP 12*–15* are interpolated, for BhP 30, 1–4 seems to be based on ViP 12*–15*. However, a clear decision cannot be made.

new material: it is the songs of the Alvārs. After the considerations in Appendix XI concerning the references to typical South Indian (often specifically *Pāṇḍya*) legends and myths, the detailed Southern geographical knowledge, and the Tamil linguistic peculiarities, along with the general date of the BhP, it cannot surprise us that the *purāṇa* should have known those Tamil hymns, if we assume that it was not composed before the ninth century.

5.321 *Chapter 22*

We may begin with BhP chapter **22,** 1–21.[87] The passage with which we are concerned here falls into two parts: vv. 1–6 describe the vow of the *gopīs*, and 7–21 the actual 'stealing of their clothes' *(vastraharaṇa)*. The first portion combines two sources: Āṇṭāḷ's TPā and NTM I, while the second derives its main inspiration from NTM III, but utilizes material also from Periyâlvār (TM II, 10, 2) and Parakālan (PTM X, 7, 11) for the narrative.

To realize that vv. 1–6 combine TPā and NTM I eliminates a pseudo-problem which has puzzled previous scholars:[88] are the rites 'to bathe during *Mārkaḻi*' and '. . . during *Tai*' different from each other, or the same? They must have been different, because Āṇṭāḷ treats them as different, while the BhP only *for literary purposes* has the two merge.[89] According to Gros,[90] in the *tai nīr āṭal* '*les fillettes demandent la pluie et un époux*'. While Āṇṭāḷ makes reference to the rain and its fertility in TPā 3 and 4 (where Kṛṣṇa is metaphorically the fertile cloud), it is in NTM I that she develops the motif of the 'husband'. She is speaking to Kāmadeva and telling him that the whole of her has been dedicated to Viṣṇu, and requesting

[87] A translation can be found in O'Flaherty, *Hindu Myths*, Harmondsworth, 1975, pp. 229–31. In order to facilitate the reading of the following pages, all Sanskrit and Tamil phrases will be given in Appendix XII, accompanied by all the reference numbers, etc. In the actual text here I shall give only the translations, with serial numbers; since the latter occur in Appendix XII in identical form, the consultation of the originals should be easy.

[88] Discussed by Gros, 1968, pp. xxxvif; there also references to literature and allusions to the *tai nīr āṭal* in *caṅkam* poetry. Also Gros rejects the identity of both rites.

[89] *Mārkaḻi* (TPā 1) is indeed the 'first month of *hemanta*' (BhP X, 22, 1) since *etymologically* it corresponds to *mārgaśīrṣa*. However, *mārkaḻi* denotes December/January, which is in fact Skt. *taiṣa*. The confusion might be explained by the fact that the Sanskrit calendar uses lunar months, while (according to the MTL) the Tamil months are solar.

[90] 1968, p. xxxvi.

him to obtain Viṣṇu's love for her. In the TPā, on the other hand, the motive for performing the rite is to become Kṛṣṇa's servants, with which the obscure symbol of the 'drum' appears to be connected. The BhP combines these various motivations for the two *nīrāṭals* (but altogether ignores the 'drum', as obscure?): 'Make the son of Nanda my husband' (v. 4), 'that Nanda's son became their husband' (v. 5).

As strict Vaiṣṇavas, the Āḻvārs avoid talking about Śaivite topics in any tone other than that of disapproval; the attitude of the BhP is less rigid,[91] and thus here the *gopīs*' rite 'during the first month, in winter' concerns Kātyāyanī-Bhadrakālī, i.e., Durgā. In BhP X, 53, 39–50 (a very close parallel to chapter 22), Rukmiṇī worships the *devī* as Ambikā and Bhavānī, for the same purpose: 'may Bhagavān Kṛṣṇa become my husband' (v. 46), and her prayer finds fulfilment. We may argue that it was the BhP which in this manner clarified an otherwise rather obscure reference in TPā 2 to the *pāvai*.[92]

(1)	the rituals we perform for our *pāvai*	they performed the vow of worshipping Kātyāyanī
(2)	when we bathe, singing the praise of our *pāvai*	muttering the prayer
(3)		they made a figure of sand of the *deyī*

22, 6 'getting up at dawn and calling each other by their names' summarizes TPā 6–15 where the scenes in the morning are elaborately described—some girls going to the houses of others who are still asleep, calling them by name, and waking them up. Part of the vow concerns eating:

[91] We noticed this in Appendix XI, No. 3 when discussing the *tīrthayātrā*: twice the *purāṇa* mentions places sacred to Devī: Kanyākumārī and Kāmakkōṭṭi. Similarly, in BhP X, 53 Rukmiṇī prays to Ambikā for Kṛṣṇa's love, and BhP X, 2 and 4 speak about Durgā as Kṛṣṇa's 'younger sister'.

[92] Gros, 1968, pp. xxxvif refuses to accept that the BhP's identification of *pāvai* 'doll, lady, figure of sand' with Kātyāyanī goes back to classical *caṅkam* times; indeed such an assumption in unnecessary, for the BhP is presumably simply clarifying for a Sanskritic audience what *pāvai* could have meant, in the manner of an *ad hoc* Sanskritization. BhP used *Markaṇḍeya-Purāṇa*, 93, 10f: 'On that beach they made a figure of Devī consisting of sand, and they worshipped her with flowers...'

(4)	ghee flowing so richly that the milk-rice gets covered as by a screen, and running down our forearms	eating "ritual food" (= rice with clarified butter)

A number of utensils and paraphernalia of worship are mentioned:

(5)	scattering pure flowers	with garlands
(6)	(clothes, water), rice	rice → water, clothes; rice offerings
(7)	ornamental lamps'	lamps

The offerings, and the ritual as a whole, are accompanied by singing Kṛṣṇa's praise:

(8)	singing about his feet singing his names[3]	they sang loudly about Kṛṣṇa

At the same time, it involves mental concentration:

(9)	with the minds meditating	their thoughts fixed on Kṛṣṇa

Perhaps we can also include the *motif* of the promise:

(10)	Māyaṉ has yesterday promised a loud drum to us young cowherd girls	you will enjoy these nights with me for the sake of which you performed this worship of Āryā

Āṇṭāḷ concludes her TPā with an expression of servitude to Kṛṣṇa:

(11) You alone we shall serve! Destroy all our other desires!

The BhP splits it up:

(12) As your servant girls we shall do what you say.
If you are my servant girls,...

(13) in the desire to touch his feet,
The desire of people whose minds are fixed upon me is not conducive to lust.

The following may be considered as parallels with NTM I.

(14)	plunging into the water before it was bright	plunging into the water when dawn was rising

(15) allot me to Him of sapphire complexion — make Nanda's son my husband

(16) I am worshipping you with *mantras* — thus reciting the *mantra*, they worshipped [her]

In NTM III Kōtai deals with the *vastraharaṇa*, as an episode independent of those of the TPā, NTM I or II. But the BhP links it with the previous verses which describe the girls' rite to Kātyāyanī. While Aṇṭāḷ takes for granted what happened—Kṛṣṇa is already sitting in a *kuruntu* tree—the BhP explains again for the benefit of non-Tamil readers.[93] However, this text has Kṛṣṇa climb on a *nīpa* tree.[94]

(17) *free refrain*: Give us our dresses back! — *twice*: give us our dresses back!

(18) You have done things that are not [in accordance with] *nīti* — do not do things that are not [in accordance with] *naya*

(19) standing in the water we feel faint [from cold] — we are shivering — then out of the water, shivering with cold. . .

Since the BhP is writing a narrative, whereas Aṇṭāḷ takes a knowledge of the events for granted, the *purāṇa* had to fill in the linking events from other sources. One such source may be PTM X, 7, 11:

(20) O lord! Must you do such wicked things to the shy girls of the cowherds? You sneaked behind their backs when they had plunged into the water with lotuses[95] and were bathing, and unnoticed by them you snatched away their fine garments, climbed up a tree, and sitting there you said, when they with serpent-fine waists begged you: 'Fine ladies! Come and take them!'

They bathed[96] in the water with delight. Bhagavān Kṛṣṇa, coming to know of it, went there . . . He snatched away their garments and

[93] Already in 3.55 I have mentioned a number of references to the 'stealing of the *gopīs*' clothes' in *caṅkam* sources; see pp. 195f.

[94] I wonder how precise the author's knowledge of botany was. *Kuruntu* is *Atalantia* (wild lime), etc. *Nīpa* is *Ixora Bandhucca*, *Nauclea cadamba*. Note that in BhP X, 16, 6 Kṛṣṇa jumped from a *kadamba* tree on Kāliya; did BhP X, 22, 9 derive the *nīpa* from the *kadamba* in chapter 16, ignorant of how to translate the Tamil *kuruntu* into Sanskrit?

[95] This specifies the place as a pond or lake.

[96] I would suggest that in the choice of phrase *salile vihṛ-* the Tamil idiom *nīr āṭal*, literally 'play in the water' → 'bathe' is still noticeable.

quickly climbed up a *nīpa* tree. He said: 'Ladies! Come here and take your clothes!'

Another source may be PâḷTM II, 10, 2:

(21) Though people from the eight directions prayed to, worshipped and praised, him, he took the garments of the [girls] with locks, around whose flowers bees swarm, and climbed on a sky-touching tree; though begged, he would not return them.[97]

It was presumably from this passage that the BhP got inspiration for the following detail:

> 'Fold your hands together over your heads, and then you must bend down in worship...' Then they bowed down in worship to him.

Thus it would appear that from four or five[98] separate sources of folk-lore the author of the BhP constructed a coherent purāṇic narrative about Kṛṣṇa's practical joke on the *gopīs*. It is interesting to note that on the one hand he took the fragments of oral, local Kṛṣṇa mythology seriously enough to insert them into the purāṇic narrative, and on the other hand he did not hesitate to leave contradictions unresolved (for example, PâḷTM II, 10, 2 'he would *not* return them'[99]), to add explanations (for example, the *pāvai* is specified as figure of Durgā), to ignore obscure details (for example, the *paṟai* 'drum' of TPā) or alter them (*kuruntu* → *nīpa*). Quite apart from the present argument in which this detailed reconstruction occurs, BhP X, 22 is an extremely interesting, because so rare, example of a specific mythologeme which can be traced back from its purāṇic appearance to its roots in oral and vernacular sources.

5.322 *Chapters 21 and 35*

We can now turn to chapter **21,** *the first song of the gopīs*; since it

[97] The last detail already differs from BhP 11; PâḷTM II, 10, 1 mentions an altogether different variant (Kṛṣṇa hides with the stolen clothes in a house); in oral mythical folklore such variations are natural.

[98] Viz. TPā, NTM I, III, PTM, PâḷTM possibly also NTM II, where the girls are playing in the sand and making various figures, could have inspired BhP v. 2 (the sand effigy of the *devī*).

[99] Compare note 97; other contradictions are the difference of months: *tai - mārkaḷi*, or Kāmadeva → Kātyāyanī (since the former, according to BhP X, 55 is Kṛṣṇa's son by Rukmiṇī, certainly for X, 53 the BhP needed an alternative).

shares the same basic source in the *Prabandham* with chapter **35,** *the fifth song of the gopīs*, we can include the latter in the present discussion.

I begin with two parallels that concern 21 and 35 separately and derive from songs other than PâḶTM III, 6.

(22) What meritorious deed did the flute previously achieve, that it alone should enjoy the nectar of Dāmodara's lip, while it belongs to the *gopīs*?

O Pāñcajanya! For many days you have been drinking the nectar of Madhusūdana's mouth!
All women declare a great war with you: you are doing something wicked!
When ycu drink the nectar of Mādhava's mouth which is the universal drink. . .

(23) a garland covered with the dust from the hooves [of the cows] —comp. 'locks covered with the dust from the cows'

your body is dusty from the dust [raised by] the calves—a garment [covered with] the dust [raised by] the calves.

Both songs in the BhP and PâḶTM III, 6 describe the effect of Kṛṣṇa's flute on people who hear it and on the whole of nature. Compare the following descriptions of Kṛṣṇa's posture:

(24) When Mukunda, his left cheek resting on his left shoulder[100], his brows moving playfully,—plays the flute resting on his lips, while his tender fingers press the stops[101].

When Govinda, his left cheek resting on his left shoulder,[100] his brows arching and moving upwards, his broad hands joining together [around it] and the corners of his mouth enclosing it—plays the flute.

Here are the listeners and their reactions:

(25) *Ladies*, their locks, adorned with flowers, opening, their garments slipping, as they hold them with one hand,- become languid.

Celestial damsels become perturbed, and forget about the knots [of their garments that are slipping off]

Goddesses, blossoms falling from their braided locks, and the knots [of their garments] loosening, swoon.

[100] Note the Tamil influence on the semantic of Skt. *bāhu* 'arm': Tamil *tōḷ* (found in the parallel) means both 'arm' and 'shoulder'.

[101] According to Śrīdhara, *mārga*=*chidra* 'hole, stop'.

(26) On account of the music of the flute, the herds of *deer* in amazement forget to graze, and the grass they have been chewing is dropping from the corner of their mouths; . . . they are standing [quiet] like painted pictures.

In herds, the *deer* and cows, amazed by the music of the flute, with mouthfuls of grass [half-] chewed between their teeth, were like a painted picture.

Fortunate are those *deer* who hear the music of the flute.

We hear furthermore about the cows, trees, birds, gods, young girls (= *gopīs*), and various half-gods like Kinnaras, etc., but it seems unnecessary to provide all these details here **(27)**, since the dependence of BhP X, 21 and 35 upon PâḷTM III, 6 should be clear by now.

5.323 *Chapter* 31

The situation of BhP **31,** the *fourth song of the gopīs*, is again more complicated; fundamentally TVM X, 3 appears to be the source of inspiration, while some stanzas by Periyâḷvār have also influenced the author. The setting of BhP 31, TVM X, 3, and PâḷTM III, 2 is the same: Kṛṣṇa has gone into the forest, and the *gopīs*, worried about what might happen to him, are anxious for his return.

(28) Show us, your female servants, your lovely lotus-face!

Show me your lotus-eyes and -mouth, which turn [all beings] into servants [of you] . . . !

(29) Make us, your female servants here, participate in the nectar of your lips. . .

Grant us the nectar of your mouth, . . . us who are your female servants!

(30) Our minds get confused, worried that your feet get tired from the stones and blades of grass. . .

You went [into the forest] so that your feet, soft like a flower and of the red lotus' colour, may get hurt. . .

You walk through the forest with your lotus-feet; does it not hurt

'. . . so that your feet might get hurt in the hot, painful forest that

on account of sharp stones[102] etc? Our mind is perturbed [from anxiety]. . .

has burning pebbles which cause pain, are sharp, since they have broken [in the heat of the sun]. . . ...your feet, like red lotuses, get scorched in the hot, painful forest

(31) When during the day you go to the forest, a moment becomes an œon for those who do not see you [then].

One day, when you have gone to graze the herd of cows, alas! is a thousand æons!

(32) Your glances (etc.) full of love...make our minds shake...

[His] eyes, mouth, . . . are inside the mind of me, a sinner, and cut it apart.

In PâḶTM III, 3, 7–9 Yaśodā recollects various miracles of Kṛṣṇa, the mere recollection of which makes her scared again; in BhP X, 31, 3, the *gopīs* recollect *the same incidents* **(33).** For v. 16: 'You deceiver! Who could abandon women at night!' we have many parallels in the *Prabandham*,[103] and a single source cannot be identified.

5.324 *Chapter 29*

BhP X, **29,** 31–41 is the *second song of the gopīs*, in which they justify their love for Kṛṣṇa and beg him to accept them. In this song, which is basically more a string of theoretical arguments than narrative or lyrical, there are resonances of a number of stanzas in the *Prabandham*, although direct translations appear to be absent. NTM I seems most closely related to the present song..

(34) We touched your feet—ever since then we are unable to stand in front of any other man.

To say that my broad breasts, which grew in total dedication to Uttaman, belong to [mortal] men (is like a jackal eating *havis*. . .) compare:

My broad breasts, which grew in love, have been dedicated to Pirān for ever, from my early youth.

[102] On *kūrpa* *'sharp things, stones' see Appendix XI, 4.

[103] PāḶTM VI, 6 a girl scolds Kṛṣṇa for having abandoned her in the night, similarly TVM IX, 9, 1f or 8, about 'the wicked deed of Kṛṣṇa: to unite and then abandon us'.

(35) We abandoned our homes in the hope of seeing you and came to your feet—grant us to be your servants.

(36) Place your lotus-hand on the burning breasts and on the heads of us, your servant girls.

Compare:
When might he place his arm on our heads?

We have come at an early hour, served you; listen to the purpose of our praising your feet: do not refuse to accept us as your servants.

That he touches with his blessed hand my tender broad breasts. . . I shall tear out my breasts. . . and thus extinguish my burning fever [in them].
Make our breasts fragrant with the *mullai* flowers [on your own chest], and place your beautiful lotus-hand on the head of us, your servant girls, as ornament.

5.325 *Chapter 30*

The *third song of the gopīs* (BhP X, **30,** 4–13) links in general terms with the many songs in the *Prabandham*[104] in which the girl apostrophizes nature. But in two places we may sense the more specific influence of Nammāḻvār:

(37) Earth! [Is your] horripilation due to the feast of being touched by Keśava's feet [now], or [did it arise] from the contact with his feet, on account of the vehement strides of Urukrama, or from the close embrace of the Boar's body?

(38) *Tulsī*! . . . he carries you along with swarms of bees. . .
Accompanied by swarms of bees on the *tulsī* flowers. . .'

I myself am the earth, . . . have taken possession of it [as Trivikrama], ... have lifted it up [as Varāha]. . .
O husband of lady Earth! After lifting her on your tusks, you married her. . .

O swarms of bees! . . . your mouths which suck from the cool *tulsī* Pirāṉ is wearing. . .

5.326 *Chapter 47*

BhP X, **47,** 12–21 is the *seventh song of the gopīs*, in which a bee (*madhupa*) is addressed. As we have seen in Nammāḻvār, the 'bee' is a poetic symbol of Kṛṣṇa (explicitly stated: 'the Bee—the god

[104] A classic example (with additional Apabhraṃśa stanzas) is found in Act IV of Kālidāsa's *Vikramôrvasīya*, where the king, searching through the forest, addresses trees and flowers, enquiring after his beloved.

with the fine winged Bird—sucked my honey'[105]), and stanza 12 in fact makes use of this ambivalence by making the words of the *gopī*, through *śleṣa*, also applicable to Kṛṣṇa (= Madhupa). Otherwise, poems addressed to bees are very common in the *Prabandham*;[106] two main themes are recognizable here: to fly to Kṛṣṇa and bring back the fragrance of his flowers; and comparing Kṛṣṇa to an ungrateful lover. Moreover, the present song has many resonances from the various 'scolding songs' which we have discussed above,[107] including the catalogues of Kṛṣṇa's 'wicked deeds'.[108] Thus it is difficult to unravel all these various strands of literary influence, but the following parallels will, I hope, show some of these influences.

(39) Having made us drink but once the nectar of his lip, suddenly he like you abandoned us, as you [abandon] the flowers.

Alas! My womanhood is like a beautiful flower which the Bee—the god . . . pressed upon [and abandoned]. . .

(40) Why do you hum here so much? Hum to [the girls who are now] his beloved!

Go! Play your flute so that its music can enter into the ears of the girls who are like black peacocks with wheels, who enjoy [at the moment] your favours!

Why did you come here, abandoning the other girls? Go back there!

(41) Controlled by a woman (Sītā), he made a woman (Sūrpaṇakhā) who was lusting after him, deformed.

He got enraged at her who desired him with rising passion and who had become languid [because of him] . . ., and cut off her nose, Cūrppaṇakā, the woman from the Rākṣasa clan. . .

(42) We believed in his crooked words as if they had been true; many times we have seen [his lies]—speak of something else!

Though I knew, knew that there was no hope, I listened to your lies. . .

Don't say any crooked words, go!

[105] See p. 356, TVM IX, 9, 4. Also No. **39** below.

[106] TVM I, 4, 6; VI, 1, 10; 8, 3f; IX, 5, 9; 7, 6.8; PTM III, 6, 1f.4; VIII, 4.

[107] See p. 454, with note 75.

[108] Most typical found in PTMat 68–78, see p. 394.

(43) Choose a reward! What would you like?

(Various rewards offered by the girl to possible messengers: TVM VI, 8, 1–3; NTM V, 5f.8)

(44) How can you lead us here to his side, union with which is difficult to give up. Closely clinging to his chest, his wife Śrī resides always with him...Does he sometimes, and then how, speak about us?

Although she knows that she (Śrī) resides on your chest, she does not give up hope [or: her love]. Say! what do you think about her?

5.327 *Chapter 90*

I would like to analyse briefly another song, BhP X, **90,** 15–25, which is sung by Kṛṣṇa's queens and thus does not belong to the *gopī* cycle. However, just in case the above 44 parallels are—*in toto*—not accepted as convincing evidence, the present song will illustrate even more abundantly than say 5.322 the borrowing of the BhP from the *Prabandham*; here from TVM II, 1.

(45) O *osprey!* You are wailing, sleepless, you do not rest. Our protector has enclosed his awareness in himself, while the whole world is asleep during [this] night. Is it, O friend, that you, like ourselves, have your thoughts deeply pierced by the amorous glances [of Kṛṣṇa]?

O *osprey*! You are not asleep, though our mother and the world of gods are sleeping. Is it because Tirumāl stole your—like our—heart?
Perumāṉ performing meditation, appeared as if asleep.
The disease of love hurts my heart: the æon-long night covers everything with darkness.

(46) O female *cakravāka* bird! During the night you only cry pitifully, you do not close your eyes, not seeing[109] your male. Or could it be that you, like ourselves, have become his servant and desire to wear on your head the garland which is at his feet?

O you *aṉṟil* bird! Your thoughts have been taken away, and you are crying while the long hours [of the night] will not pass. Is it because you, like ourselves who are his servants, desire the garland of cool *tulsī* attached to his feet?

[109] It is plausible to suspect in this phrase 'not seeing' the Tamil idiom *kāṇātu* 'not to see x' = 'x is absent'.

(47) O *ocean*! Always groaning without ever falling asleep! Or is it that you, your own token taken away by Mukunda, are in the same inescapable condition as we are?

O you [roaring] *ocean*! Not obtaining the object you desire[110] you do not sleep at all day or night and weep, your heart melting. Is it because you too are suffering from what we suffer?

(48) O *moon*! You are seized by powerful consumption and have [thus] become so diminished that you cannot diminish the darkness with your rays.

O new *moon*! You are fading away to-day . . . and do not dispel the darkness of the black sky.

The BhP version becomes increasingly original, but v. 20, like TVM II, 1, 5, addresses the clouds of the sky, and many phrases continue to be similar. The rationale seems clear: according to Sanskrit poetic laws, long refrains, frequently repeated phrases, and other features typical of Tamil strophic song would be tedious and thus greater variety and originality than could be provided by a formal translation of TVM II, 1 were necessary.

5.33 *Evaluation*

I do not think that it is necessary to argue in great detail about the relationship between the *gopī* episodes in the BhP and the Āḻvārs. I believe the parallels collected[111] above are more than sufficient to

[110] One could think of a number of such objects, for example, Kṛṣṇa's conch Pāñcajanya, the moon, the nectar, the ocean's daughter Lakṣmī—all items which at some stage had been taken away from the ocean. In PTM XI, 1, 5 we hear: 'the ocean is crying—is it because He stole the moon. . .' (*mati vāṅkavē kolō kaṭal pulampukiṉṟatē*). The moon—the ocean's 'son'—was among the objects taken after the churning of the milk-ocean.

[111] It is clear that the sentences compared with each other do not all belong to the same logical plane; 'parallel' means a number of different things. Thus many of the parallels are definite translations from the Tamil original into Skt., others are textual borrowings and adaptations, and, at the other end of the spectrum, some Sanskrit phrases are but precipitates of common Tamil (or *Prabandham*) poetic features. Moreover, taken individually, many of these parallels might appear arbitrary, but all those cases where in *one* Skt. song many parallels with *one* Tamil poem are found, can be considered to be of decisive argumentative force. For reasons of space the songs and poems have not been given here in full; this would, I think, have made my assumption of literary influences even more immediately plausible.

prove such a relationship.[112] But a few remarks about the *direction of influence* may be made, although I believe it is fairly obvious by now that the BhP utilizes the Āḻvārs, and not vice versa.

(1) While the Āḻvārs are not familiar with the Br/ViP version, the BhP uses it as its major narrative source.

(2) Separate incidents (e.g. TPā, NTM I and III) are woven together to form one narrative episode.

(3) TVM II, 1, when turned into Sanskrit (BhP X, 90), is exploited but additions are made so that a full song, complying with the demands of the Skt. *ālaṅkārikas*, emerges.

(4) When describing Kṛṣṇa's bullfight, the whole setting is changed to one comprehensible to a non-Tamil audience; the parallel to the *Kalittokai* is best explained as borrowing by the BhP.[113]

[112] Some further examples may be referred to here which fall outside the *gopī* episodes. BhP XI, 6, 46 can be considered a fairly literal translation of PâḻTM I, 1, 9:

(49) 'Adorned with the garlands, perfumes, garments, and jewels which you have worn previously, and eating what you have left, we your servants. . .'

'Wearing the yellow garment which you wore and discarded, eating from your plate,...adorning ourselves with the *tulsī* flowers which adorned you and which you discarded, we who are such servants of yours...'

Describing in BhP X, 5, 12–4 the manner in which the *gopas* celebrated the birth of Nanda's son, the *purāṇa* adopts in v. 14 PâḻTM I, 2, 4.6; when the *gopīs* come and complain about Kṛṣṇa's mischief (BhP X, 8, 27–31), PâḻTM II, 9, 1.3.9 are utilized. The BhP mentions twice that Yaśodā saw in Kṛṣṇa's mouth the whole universe (X, 7, 35ff; 8, 33–44); PâḻTM I, 2, 6f is almost totally incorporated into these two passages. (It is possible, though not necessary, to assume that the two versions are by different authors, that of chapter 8 being later; but quite clearly *both* versions use Periyâḻvār independently, and this must be taken into consideration, if single authorship of the BhP is questioned. But it is not even necessary to assume that two different authors were responsible for X, 7, 35ff and 8, 33–44; chapter 7 is based on PâḻTM I, 1, 8f, and v. 9 mentions that the Kṛṣṇa baby 'opens up his entire inside' (referring there to his enormous appetite). Chapter 8 is based on quite a variety of songs of Periyâḻvār (*inter alia* I, 2; 4; II, 9; III, 1f), and somehow also PâḻTM I, 1, 6f (which mention that Yaśodā saw in Kṛṣṇa's mouth the whole universe) is employed. Thus the two versions could be explained as derived from two different verses in the PâḻTM.) BhP X, 11, 10–7 has many literal parallels with PâḻTM II, 2, particularly vv. 2–5, 9, and as in the Tamil song combines two separate themes: the call to come and the admonition to stay clean before the festival that is soon to take place. Compare in particular:

(50) 'The king of Vraja (= Nanda) who wants to eat, is waiting for you.'

'Your father (= Nanda) who wants to eat together with you, has not yet eaten.'

[113] See Appendix XI, note 16 *ad* BhP X, 58, 40, about *Kalittokai* 103.

(5) The whole rearrangement of chapters 21 to 29 (see Table XXVIII) rests on the TPā v. 1, as the model.
(6) None of the songs for which we have found parallels in the Āḻvārs, can in any way be derived from the Br/ViP version.
(7) When introducing the messenger song 47, 12–21, the BhP considers it necessary to explain to a non-Tamil audience 'imagining it to be a messenger sent by Kṛṣṇa' (v. 11).
(8) In the rearrangement of chapters 21–9, and in 33, 8 and 11, are left traces of the old *mullai* -rainy season symbolism which cannot be derived from the ViP.

We could go on adding further reasons, but there is no need to keep on stating the obvious.

Another question arising is how precisely we are to envisage this borrowing? Here the assumption that it took place on the basis of an oral tradition and not from the *Prabandham* as a definite *corpus* (in other words, after Nāthamuni) rests on somewhat feebler grounds. In PâḻTM II, 9, 9 we have *cōtikkiṉṟāṉ*, which as Tamil loan-word means 'he searches for; he investigates', but as Sanskrit word *(<dyotaya-)* would mean 'he illuminates'. It seems that the BhP interprets it in the latter sense. Moreover, the *Prabandham* has as the object of the verb *oḷi veṇṇey* 'shining butter'; assuming now that the BhP understood it as **oḷi veṇ mey* 'shining white body', we can explain BhP X, 8, 30 *svâṅgaṃ dhṛta-maṇi-gaṇam artha-pradīpam* (Śridhara: + *racayati*) '(making) his own body which wears many jewels the lamp for his senses (=eyes)'. I think this is a good example to show that a) the BhP borrowed from PâḻTM, and b) that the BhP knew of the songs only orally (*veṇ mey* instead of *veṇṇey*). However, the question will require further study, which cannot be undertaken here.

It follows from 5.32 that all the Major Āḻvārs have been used. The Āḻvārs who according to my rather fragile chronology are later than these (see Table XIV) produced no Kṛṣṇaite material which could have been used by the BhP in the *gopī* episodes. But taking four separate lines of argument together, we may be able to formulate as a reasonable working hypothesis that somewhere in the Pāṇṭiya-nāṭu, not later than the ninth or early tenth century AD., the BhP was composed on the basis of the ViP as its purāṇic model and orally current Āḻvār songs.

(1) Our analysis of the *Prabandham* suggests that the latest poetry recorded in it links with the *Śrīraṅgam milieu*, which in turn may be

connected with the early Ācāryas. This milieu cannot be reconciled with three features typical of the BhP: the interest in erotic Kṛṣṇa myths, emotional bhakti, and tolerance of Śaivism. Therefore the BhP could hardly have been composed in this milieu.
(2) The Āḻvārs who account for the greatest number of parallels in 5.32 are Pāṇṭiyan—note the limited importance of Parakālaṉ and Kulaśekhara. Again, the centre of gravity of the *tīrthayātrā* (see Appendix XI, No. 3) and of uncommon myths (see ibid. No. 1) is the Pāṇṭiya-nāṭu.
(3) It is not possible to infer from BhP XI, 5, 38–41a (see ibid. No. 5) that twelve Āḻvārs, or the Āḻvārs as a well-defined group, are mentioned—an omission which is difficult to imagine if the verses had been written *after* a definite *corpus* of their poetry had been created.
(4) While no influence from the Br/ViP passages could be shown for the Āḻvārs' treatment of the *gopī* story, the BhP makes the former its model.

All this cannot be regarded as final proof, but it reduces the margin of the *termini ad quem* and *a quo* considerably: since Tirumaṅkai-Āḻvār is utilized, the BhP must be later than the eighth century; putting Periyâḻvār and Āṇṭāḷ after Parakālaṉ pushes the *terminus a quo* further towards the ninth century, which allows at the same time for the ViP to gain sufficient prestige in the South to be used by the BhP. Even if we assumed that the milieu in which the BhP was written was simply ignorant of Nāthamuni's *corpus*, Al-Bīrūnī's evidence (gathered after all in the North *c.* 1030 AD) would necessitate the assumption of at least 50 or 100 years to intervene between the composition of the BhP and it being included as a *mahāpurāṇa* in a North Indian list.[114] Thus the ninth or early tenth century appears as the most likely date of the BhP.

This leaves one problem unsolved: was the BhP written by one or many authors? But I am unable to comment on this; it would be conceivable that in the same milieu, during a short span of time, more than one Tamil-speaking writer contributed to the BhP. (Compare for example the double BhP X, 7 and 8)

5.4 Religion and philosophy in the BhP: the love of the *gopīs*

In a sense, the whole of our previous discussion has centred on the

[114] Also Hacker's '*nicht lange nach dem Auftreten des großen Śaṅkara*' (1959,

two poles of religious attitude: normative bhakti, which in the Br/ViP was imposed on the *gopī*-episodes, and emotionalism cultivated to its first grandiose climax by the Āḻvārs. When we find that a *purāṇa*, which moreover displays advaitic trends, inserts songs modelled on Āḻvār poetry into a narrative derived from the ViP, we may well wonder how such a meeting can work in practice, and we shall not be very surprised when we discover certain discrepancies and unsolved problems. I shall proceed as follows: to begin with, I shall attempt a straightforward description of the love of the *gopīs* (5.41); since the BhP frequently reflects on the significance of this love, I shall then analyse the philosophical interpretation it provides which, in a somewhat artificial manner, can be divided into a complex which remains in basic agreement with the phenomenon (5.42), and a complex which differs from it by bringing to bear upon it certain metaphysical preconceptions (5.43).

5.41 *A phenomenological description of the* gopīs' *love*

About twenty times in the verses dealing with the *gopīs* it is stated that all the mental, emotional and psychic processes of the girls are concentrated on Kṛṣṇa. We hear of:

manas: 30, 19. 43; 31, 10. 17; 46, 4
mānasa: 29, 4
citta: 22, 23; 29, 34; 30, 2
cetas: 22, 5
dhī: 44, 15; 47, 52
āśā: 29, 23 (seat of emotion)
mūrti: 30, 3 (person)

In many cases, Kṛṣṇa simply occurs as first member of a compound, with a number of terms in the second position,[115] so that we have to translate: 'whose thoughts are [concentrated on] Kṛṣṇa',[116] 'whose minds [have turned towards] Him',[117] etc. But frequently the effect of Kṛṣṇa on the mind, etc., is further specified. We find:

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p. 127; see 5.2 note 23 above) would speak against a date too close to AD 1030, although Hacker's and Gail's 'eighth century' is too early.

115 *Kṛṣṇa-cetasaḥ* 22, 5; *tan-manāḥ* 30, 19; *tan-manaskās* 30, 43, etc.

116 *Kṛṣṇa-cetasaḥ* 22, 5.

117 *tan-manāḥ* 30, 19.

gṛhīta 22, 23; 29, 4 'seized, caught, overpowered,[118] obtained'
apahṛta 29, 8. 34 'snatched away, stolen' *hṛta* 47, 52 'dto'
yantrita 29, 23 'engineered, operated (as a machine)'
tapta 29, 38 'pained, heated'
ākṣipta 30, 2 'seized, overcome, charmed, transported'
pratirūḍha 30, 3 'imitated' (lit. replanted)
anurakta 44, 15 'attached to, affectionate towards'.

We must now specify which aspect of Kṛṣṇa has this effect on the *gopīs*; the contexts in which those phrases occur make it quite clear that it is Kṛṣṇa's physical, sensual appearance, his beauty, which entrances the girls and not any abstract philosophical concept. For example:

Intoxicated, and their thoughts captured by his walk, affectionate smiles, amorous glances, charming talk, sport, and pleasantries. . .[119]

Since our minds which had settled in peace in our homes . . . were stolen by you, our feet do not move one step away from you; how could we return to Vraja? . . . Besprinkle with the flow of nectar from your lower lip the fire of our love caused by the soft music [of your flute], your sidelong glances and your smiles.[120]

This is where lies the difference from intellectual bhakti (illustrated typically in the ViP): the senses are essential and primary means to let Kṛṣṇa's sensuous and sensual beauty captivate the mind.

One girl placed Him in her heart through the openings of her eyes, closed them, and embraced Him, her body bristling and immersed in bliss.[121]

Under normal circumstances, this would be impure *kāma*, earthly passion. But: 'The *kāma* of people whose thoughts are on me does not make for *kāma*: grains, once boiled and fried, are not used as

[118] From the same root we have in fact *graha* 'possessing demon'; 'overpowered' is seen in that context in MW; see p.40

[119] 30,2: *gaty-ānurāga-smita-vibhramêkṣitair manoramâlāpa-vihāra-vibhramaiḥ/ ākṣipta-cittāḥ pramadā*...Compare 31, 10.

[120] 29, 34f: *cittaṃ sukhena bhavatâpahṛtaṃ gṛheṣu yan nirviśaty...pādau padaṃ na calatas tava pāda-mūlād yāmaḥ katham Vrajam . .//siñcâṅga nas tvad-adharâmṛta-pūrakeṇa hāsâvaloka-kala-gīta-ja-hṛcchayâgnim /*

[121] 32,8: *taṃ kācin netra-randhreṇa hṛdi kṛtya nimīlya ca / pulakâṅgy upaguhya... ānanda-samplutā* // Compare 82.39: *dṛgbhir hṛdī-kṛtam...parirabhya.*

seeds.'[122] So passionate thought of Kṛṣṇa, 'boiled and fried' in the fire of separation, purifies whatever earthly desires may be in this passion. This possession of the mind by Kṛṣṇa, this intoxication and heated emotion obstructs 'intellectual' bhakti:

> Remembering the deeds of Kṛṣṇa, they attempted to describe them, but agitated by love, their minds got confused and they were unable to do so.[123]

But more important than this, it expresses itself in all those ecstatic symptoms which we have already frequently encountered:

horripilation (21, 9.19; 30, 10, 13; 32, 8; 33, 12; 35, 9 etc.)
weeping (21, 9.13; 39, 18 etc.)
flowers dropping from loosening hair (21, 12; 34, 23; 39, 14)
knot of *sari* gets loose (21, 12; 39, 14)
sweating (33, 16)
swooning (34, 23; 39, 16).

It may be illuminating to compare the description in the BhP with the way in which the Br/ViP depicted the ten stages of love.[124] The reader may use his own imagination in collecting references which correspond to the earlier stages from the material presented here. What we are interested in here is the higher stages.

Schema A:

(8) *unmāda* 'mental confusion': *unmattaka°* 30, 4; *unmatta-vaco* 14.
(9) *mūrchā* 'swooning': *saṃmumuhuḥ* 39, 16 'they swooned'.

Schema B:

(7) *udvega* 'depression, disgust': *viṣaṇṇā* 29, 28 'depressed'
(8) *vyādhi* 'disease': *hṛd-ruj* 32, 13 'disease of the heart'; *viraha-ja-tāpa* 33, 1 'fever caused by separation'.

Schema A/B:

(10) *maraṇa* 'death': *jahur guṇa-mayaṃ deham* 29, 11 'they gave up their material bodies'
virahajâgny-upayukta-dehā 29, 35 'with bodies burnt up by the fire of separation'.

In other words, the BhP explores the full range of the ten stages

[122] 22, 26: *na mayy āveśita-dhiyāṃ kāmaḥ kāmāya kalpate/bharjitāḥ kvathitā dhānā . . . bījāya nêṣyate//*

[123] 21, 4: *tad varṇayitum ārabdhāḥ smarantyaḥ Kṛṣṇa-ceṣṭitam / nâśakan smara-vegena vikṣipta-manaso...//*

[124] See pp. 100f.

of love in separation, including those stages which denote high emotional tension and collapse.

On a number of occasions, the *gopīs* are separated from Kṛṣṇa; the BhP exploits these separations to utilize the material typical of the Br/ViP: the *gopīs* begin to 'recollect', 'remember', 'meditate upon' Kṛṣṇa, his physical attraction, and his deeds. But the BhP includes other features as well. The first occasion arises when 'Keśava realized their pride and delusion on account of their luck, and concealed himself there in order to calm them and favour them'.[125]

> When Bhagavān had suddenly concealed himself, the women of Vraja, not seeing him, were in great agony . . . Intoxicated and their minds captured . . . they imitated[126] his deeds. . . They communicated to each other the sport and pleasantries of Kṛṣṇa. . . In a group, singing with loud voices his [praise] alone. . .[127]

Thus the situation of separation gives rise to 'imitation of his deeds', 'communicating them to each other', and 'singing his praise'. Their unsuccessful search for Kṛṣṇa concludes:

> Having all their thoughts on Him, their talk about Him, their actions [being those of] Him, their selves in Him, they praised only His qualities and forgot about their homes. They returned to the bank of the Yamunā, and craving for His return and with their imagination [or: emotions] on Kṛṣṇa, together sang about Him.[128]

The second occasion arises constantly: in the morning Kṛṣṇa leaves Vraja to take the cows into the forest, and only in the evening does he return to the *gopīs*. Twice the BhP deals with this situation, and as we have seen,[129] the two songs sung form a frame to the main *gopī* episodes. In the first passage, the *gopīs* hear Kṛṣṇa play the flute far away in the forest: 'some described to their friends, in the

[125] 29, 48: *tāsāṃ tat-saubhagam adaṃ vīkṣya mānaṃ ca Keśavaḥ/praśamāya prasādāya tatrâivântaradhīyata//*

[126] According to Śrīdhara and MW, *jagṛhuḥ* 'imitated playfully'.

[127] 30, 1..4: *antarhite Bhagavati sahasâiva Vrajâṅganāḥ/atapyaṃs tam acakṣāṇāḥ . . . (1) (gati . . .)-ākṣipta-cittāḥ pramadāḥ . . . tās tā viceṣṭā jagṛhus . . . (2) nyavedişuḥ Kṛṣṇa-vihāra-vibhramāḥ (3) gāyantya uccair amum eva saṃhatā...(4)*

[128] 30, 43f: *tan-manaskās tad-ālāpās tad-viceṣṭās tad-ātmikāḥ/tad-guṇān eva gāyantyo nâtmâgārāṇi sasmaruḥ // punaḥ pulinam āgatya Kālindyāḥ Kṛṣṇa-bhāvanāḥ/samavetā jaguḥ Kṛṣṇaṃ tad-āgamana-kāṅkṣitāḥ//*

[129] In chapters 21 and 35; see 5.322.

absence of Kṛṣṇa, (his appearance. . .)',[130] 'remembering the deeds of Kṛṣṇa. . .',[131] 'the *gopīs* described to each other the amorous games of Bhagavān'.[132] In the second passage, we hear again: 'The *gopīs* passed the days with difficulty [or: in anxiety], following Him in their thoughts and singing about His *līlā*.'[133] 'During daytime the women of Vraja sang about Kṛṣṇa's *līlā*, and with their minds and their thoughts on Him, found their pleasure.'[134]

Then comes the occasion for the final separation: Akrūra arrives and takes Kṛṣṇa away to Mathurā:

> Others, with all the operations of their senses withdrawn from the world in meditation on Him . . . Other women remembered the words of Śauri. . . Thinking of His amorous walk . . . Afraid and worried about separation from Mukunda they grouped together. . .[135]

While the resonances with the ViP are clear, it is equally obvious that intellectual *bhakti-yoga* into which some *gopīs* are thrown by the separation, is only one, and not even the most important, reaction of the *gopīs*. More pronounced is a different reaction based on a different attitude. The previous ten or so quotations in fact occur in introductions or conclusions to *songs* sung by the *gopīs*. Let us thus look at the attitude expressed in these songs, an attitude which corresponds to the type of reaction to separation which we have pointed out. There is no need to enter into an elaborate discussion now, because 5.32 contains all the relevant material. In separation, the BhP makes the *gopīs* sing songs which are adaptations of Āḻvār poems; more precisely, songs in which the basic validity of sensuous experience and passion is defended. Separated from Kṛṣṇa the *gopīs* suffer and lament because their whole being longs for physical contact with Him.

[130] 21, 3: *kāścit parokṣaṃ Kṛṣṇasya sva-sakhībhyo 'nvavarṇayan.*

[131] 21, 4: *smarantyaḥ Kṛṣṇa-ceṣṭitam.*

[132] 21, 20: *Bhagavato . . . varṇayantyo mitho gopyaḥ krīḍās.*

[133] 35, 1: *gopyaḥ . . . tam anudruta-cetasaḥ/Kṛṣṇa-līlāḥ pragāyantyo ninyur duḥkhena vāsarān//*

[134] 35, 26: *Vraja-striyo . . . Kṛṣṇa-līlā nu gāyatīḥ/remire 'haḥsu tac-cittās tan-manaskā. . .// -īḥ* is very frequent in the BhP for the nom. fem. pl. *-yaḥ.*

[135] 39, 15..18: *anyāś ca tad-anudhyāna-nivṛttâśeṣa-vṛttayaḥ (15) . . . smarantyaś câparāḥ Śaurer . . . giraḥ (16) gatiṃ sulalitām.. (17) cintayantyo Mukundasya bhītā viraha-kātarāḥ sametāḥ saṅghaśaḥ. . . (18)*

We do not know any better reward for people endowed with eyes than [to be able to see] His face . . . and drink His loving sidelong glances.[136]
Their eyes were demurely fixed on Him, and they could not leave.[137]
Which woman in all the three worlds would not break the laws of decency: she only has to look at . . your beauty?[138]
Place your hand-lotus on our burning breasts and on our heads![139]
Put your hand-lotus on our heads! Show us your face! Rest your foot-lotus on our breasts! Let us drink the nectar of your lips![140]

Accusing the creator, they say:

Cruel are you...by taking away from us the eyes you gave us—(eyes) with the help of which we could see the entire splendour of your creation [gathered] in one point, Kṛṣṇa.[141]

They ask Uddhava whether Kṛṣṇa 'will return here to restore life to us by [the touch of] His limbs'.[142] Even Kṛṣṇa, who in Mathurā entrusts Uddhava with messages ('dispel the agony of separation from me, of the *gopīs*, through my messages'),[143] agrees:

The women of Gokula are (mentally and physically) exhausted from the intense feeling of longing caused by *viraha*, since I, who am the most precious of all that is precious [to them], am far away.[144]

We must not forget that for the *gopīs* these desires are not mere dreams, but that time and again Kṛṣṇa has granted them this physical fulfilment:

All these girls reached the highest bliss from the great feast of looking at Keśava, and all grief which had been caused by separation from Him was destroyed.[145]

[136] 21, 7: *akṣaṇvatāṃ phalam idaṃ na paraṃ vidāmaḥ . . . vaktraṃ . . . nipītam anurakta-kaṭâkṣam.*
[137] 22, 23: *no celus tasmin lajjāyitêkṣaṇāḥ.*
[138] 29, 40: *kā stry aṅga te . . . ārya-caritān na calet trilokyām/. . , nirīkṣya rūpam.*
[139] 29, 41: *no nidhehi kara-paṅkajam . . . tapta-staneṣu ca śiraḥsu.*
[140] 31, 5..8: *kara-saroruham . . . śirasi dhehi naḥ (5) no . . . ānanam . . darśaya (6) te padâmbujaṃ kṛṇu kuceṣu naḥ (7) adhara-sidhunâpy āyayasva naḥ (8).*
[141] 39, 21: *krūras tvam . . . naś cakṣur hi dattaṃ harase . . . yenâika-deśe 'khila-sarga-sauṣṭavaṃ tvadīyam adrākṣma vayaṃ Madhudviṣaḥ//*
[142] 47, 44: *apy eṣyatîha . . . sañjīvayaṃs tu no gātrair.*
[143] 46, 3: *gopīnāṃ mad-viyogâdhiṃ mat-sandeśair vimocaya.*
[144] 46, 5: *mayi tāḥ preyasāṃ preṣṭhe dūra-sthe Gokūla-striyaḥ/. . .virahâutkaṇṭhya-vihvalāḥ//*
[145] 32, 9: *sarvās tāḥ Keśavâloka-paramôtsava-nirvṛtāḥ/jahur virahajaṃ tāpam.*

Stretching out his arms, he embraced them, touched their hands, hair, thighs, and breasts, fingered the knots of their *saris*, joked, scratched them with his nails; thereby he excited desire in the girls of Vraja and then took his pleasure with them.[146]

Their senses filled with [or: confused by] the deluding bliss of the touch of his body. . .[147]

The women in Mathurā express their envy of the *gopīs*:

What penance did the *gopīs* perform [in a former life] that they [may] drink with their eyes His form which is the essence of beauty and knows no equal or superior?[148]

Thus the ideal is clearly actual physical contact, via the senses, with Kṛṣṇa—an ideal maintained even when in consequence of separation this is impossible: Kṛṣṇa's absence does not change the attitude of the *gopīs*; all it does is to make them aware of means to ease the *viraha;* it teaches them forms in which some of Kṛṣṇa's beauty can still be experienced: symbols and symbolic structures. Singing about him, telling each other his secrets, acting his deeds, physical contact with objects associated with him,[149] and his own messages are such symbols. But among all of them the *songs* are clearly the most important for the BhP. By enjoying them, 'the *gopīs* obtained happiness'.[150]

In essence we have thus arrived at a description of the *gopīs*' love which corresponds to the Hv[151] and Āḻvār versions. Its fundamental 'anthropocentrism' which constantly maintains the validity of the whole person (body, senses, emotions, mind) brings it into contrast with the ViP version, although Br/ViP 50–70 (which are

[146] 29, 46: *bāhu-prasāra-parirambha-karâlakôru-nīvī-stanâlabhana-narma-nakhâgra-pātaiḥ/. . .Vraja-sundarīṇām uttambhayan Rati-patiṃ ramayāṃcakāra//* (My 'translation' of the monstrous compound in line *a* is merely a free rendering.)

[147] 33, 18: *tad-aṅga-saṅga-pramudâkulêndriyāḥ.*

[148] 44, 14: *gopyas tapaḥ kim acaran yad amuṣya rūpaṃ lāvaṇya-sāram asamôrdhvam . . . dṛgbhir pibanti.*

[149] Thus we hear in 21, 17 of hill-tribe women who 'smear on their faces and breasts the *kuṅkuma* . . . which had coloured Kṛṣṇa's feet'.

[150] 35,26: *remire.* Compare 39,37: *viśokā . . gāyantyaḥ* 'singing, they forgot their grief'.

[151] It is difficult to say whether the BhP directly borrowed from the Hv; parallels like Hv 63, 29 and BhP 35, 26 (quoted at the beginning of 6.00) or the references to 'drinking His face/beauty' (BhP, e.g., 44, 14) might suggest a direct influence.

not altogether typical of the general character of bhakti which the ViP displays in other parts) are closer in spirit to the BhP.[152]

5.42 *Reflections congruent with the phenomenon*

The author of the BhP version has in many places added his own comments, philosophical and theological observations and interpretations. But in a manner similar to that of his literary technique, he employs quite a variety of such interpretations, deriving them from very different ideological areas. Some of these, like a 'substantialist' explanation of the *gopīs*' *kāma*[153] or the fanciful idea that their husbands had replica-*gopīs* in their beds so that they did not notice the absence of their real wives during the *rāsa* nights,[154] can be ignored here. Many ideas embedded in this version appear in close agreement with the phenomenon of the *gopīs*' love and the sources from which it is derived (Hv and Alvārs); these will be summarized here.

The particular form in which Bhagavān manifests himself to the *gopīs* is that of ravishing beauty; this means at the same time that this beauty is symbolic of the transcendental: all beauty converges in Kṛṣṇa's beauty: 'We could see the entire splendour of your creation in one place: Kṛṣṇa.'[155] 'His form is the essence of beauty.'[156] Thus it is 'the highest reward for beings endowed with

[152] See p. 114.

[153] The passage is BhP 29, 12–6. King Parīkṣit asked:
'Sage! they [= gopīs] knew Kṛṣṇa as their lover, not as *brahman*. How was it then possible for them, who considered only his material side, that their material frame came to an end [viz. that they found liberation]?'
Śuka answered:
'I have previously [in VII, 1, especially vs. 23–6; also in X, 74] told you how the Cedi king [= Śiśupāla] obtained salvation, *although he hated* Kṛṣṇa; therefore all the more the *lovers* of Kṛṣṇa. . . Those who place their desire, hatred, fear, love, friendship, or realisation of oneness constantly on Hari, become absorbed in him.'
Kṛṣṇaṃ viduḥ . . . kāntaṃ na tu brahmatayā, mune/guṇa-pravāhôparamas tāsāṃ guṇa-dhiyāṃ katham? //12// uktaṃ purastād etat te Caidyaḥ siddhiṃ yathā gataḥ/ dviṣann api Hṛṣīkeśaṃ kim utâdhokṣaja-priyāḥ //13// kāmaṃ krodhaṃ bhayaṃ sneham aikyaṃ sauhṛdam eva ca/ nityaṃ Harau vidadhato yānti tanmayatāṃ hi te //14// Compare PaP VI, 272, 167–9.

[154] BhP 33, 38: 'The people of Vraja were indeed not angry with Kṛṣṇa, for deluded by his *māyā* they imagined their respective wives to be at their sides.'

[155] See note 141 above.

[156] See note 148 above.

eyes';[157] as Kṛṣṇa himself says: '[all] beings find their delight in me'.[158] This is illustrated by the BhP in two songs (ch. 21 and 35):[159] the whole cosmos—men, animals, trees, rivers, etc.—becomes enraptured by seeing Kṛṣṇa's beauty and by listening to the flute he plays. Moreover, the cosmos expresses its rapture not only in reactions typical of love poetry (the trees horripilate,[160] etc.), but also in acts of worship. Particularly chapter 21 illustrates this: each *utprekṣa* indicates a feature of *temple-worship*. Thus the rivers 'touch his feet' and 'carry lotuses as offerings',[161] the clouds provide a 'parasol' and 'shower flowers'[162] etc.[163] This vision of the whole cosmos adoring and worshipping Kṛṣṇa's beauty is quite unique, although there are vague traces in the Āḻvārs.[164]

The senses, essential in order to perceive Kṛṣṇa's beauty, and the emotions resulting from the sensuous impressions, are accepted as a matter of human nature and destiny: '(O creator!) . . . the eyes you gave us',[165] 'you provided corporeal beings with [the emotions of] affection and love'.[166]

Kṛṣṇa's motives for revealing his beauty to the *gopīs* and for granting them physical satisfaction are grace and compassion: 'Bhagavān manifests himself for the sake of people's final beatitude';[167] 'out of compassion he had his sport with the *gopīs*';[168] 'full of compassion and out of affection';[169] 'he takes a human body in order to favour all beings'.[170] This implies that by merely

157 See note 136 above.

158 29, 23: *prīyante mayi jantavaḥ.*

159 It is also implied, for example, in 30, 10.13.

160 For example, 21, 19; 30, 13.

161 21, 15: *gṛhṇanti pāda-yugalaṃ kamalôpahārāḥ;* compare 35, 7.

162 21, 16: *kusumâvalībhiḥ . . . ātapatram*; compare 35, 13.

163 Deer offer worship by just gazing (21, 11), the hill-tribe women smear *kuṅkuma* on their breasts (21, 17), the mountains offer water (21, 18), the wind carries sandal and the minstrels sing and play music (35, 21).

164 On 'nature-mysticism' in the Āḻvārs see p. 467. Poykai (1st Ant 1) says: 'With the earth as lamp-bowl, the ocean as its oil, and the sun as its flame, I worshipped His feet. . .'

165 39, (19) 21: (*aho vidhātas*!) *cakṣur . . . dattam.*

166 39, 19: *saṃyojya maitryā praṇayena dehinaḥ.*

167 29, 14: *nṛṇāṃ niḥśreyasârthāya vyaktir Bhagavato.*

168 29, 42: *sa-dayaṃ gopīr . . . arīramat.*

169 33, 21: *karuṇaḥ premṇā.*

170 33, 37: *anugrahāya bhūtānāṃ mānuṣaṃ deham āsthitaḥ.*

reacting to Kṛṣṇa's beauty which he manifests through his grace, a *gopī* can obtain salvation, reaching up to the Absolute.

> Although they conceived of Him [merely] as their lover, they united with the Highest *Ātman*; . . . they knew Kṛṣṇa as their lover, not as Brahman.[171]

However, his motives for concealing himself and causing the *gopīs* to undergo the suffering of separation are more elusive. Thus it can be regarded as 'grace and calming down';[172] as done for the sake of letting love and devotion grow:

> Friends! I do not love even the people who love me, so that their attachment may continue, just as a poor man, when all his wealth has perished, thinks of it so intently that he knows nothing else. In the same way I have concealed myself . . . for the sake of your devotion to me.[173]

It is this fire of separation[174] which burns up all the impurities of *kāma*.[175] To the eyes of the *gopīs* it looks different: 'they were highly astonished at his wickedness.'[176]

This fluctuation between union and separation, whatever their motivation, is interpreted in a number of ways. Thus the *gopīs* complain to the creator (by implication obviously to Kṛṣṇa):

> You provide corporeal beings with friendship and love, but not having any compassion, you separate them before they find fulfilment in it; your play is without sense, like the behaviour of a child![177]

In front of Uddhava they burst out on more violent lines:

> Friendship with others is solely for the sake of one's own profit; it will be pretended only so long as the profit lasts. . . Prostitutes abandon the man whose wealth is exhausted...[178]

[171] 29, 11f: *tam eva paramâtmānaṃ jāra-buddhyâpi saṅgatāḥ . . . Kṛṣṇaṃ viduḥ . . . kāntaṃ na tu brahmatayā.*

[172] See note 125 above.

[173] 32, 20f: *nâhaṃ tu sakhyo bhajato 'pi jantūn bhajāmy amīṣām anuvṛtti-vṛttaye/ yathâdhano labdha-dhane vinaṣṭe tac-cintayânyan nibhṛto na veda // evam . . . mayy anuvṛttaye . . . mayā parokṣam . . . tirohitam.*

[174] 29, 35: *hṛcchayâgni* 'fire of love', 46, 3: *viyogâdhi* 'disease of separation', v.5: *virahâutkaṇṭhya* 'anxiety of separation', etc.

[175] See note 122 above.

[176] 30, 41: *daurātmyād vismayaṃ paramaṃ yayuḥ//*

[177] 39, 19: *tava na kvacid dayā: saṃyojya maitryā praṇayena dehinaḥ tāṃś câkṛtârthān viyunakṣy. apârthakaṃ vikrīḍitaṃ te 'rbhaka-ceṣṭitaṃ yathā//*

[178] 47, 6f: *anyeṣv artha-kṛtā maitrī, yāvad-artha-viḍambanam (6) niḥsvaṃ tyajanti gaṇikā (7).*

Kṛṣṇa takes a more matter-of-fact, almost fatalistic attitude:

Does not the Lord[179] unite and separate the elements? As the wind blows together clouds, grass, cotton, or dust and disperses them again, thus the creator (unites and separates) the beings.[180]

Finally, Kṛṣṇa's deeds are styled *līlā* or *krīḍā* 'game, sport, playful but purposeless action'.[181]

This purposeless play into which the *gopīs* throw themselves strikes at the root of normative values, of *dharma*. Quite frequently this topic is discussed in the *gopī* story. In 29, 19–27, Kṛṣṇa pretends(?) that the *gopīs* did wrong in coming out into the forest to be with him, and tries to send them back home:

Women who desire the [other] world, must not abandon their husbands, even if he is of bad temper, miserable, old, stupid, sick, or poor—so long as he is not depraved. For a woman of good family it creates contempt everywhere to have a lover; she will not reach heaven, but gets a bad name.[182]

But the author styles these words 'unfriendly',[183] and the *gopīs* convince Kṛṣṇa that their love can be justified (vv. 31–41): it is the direct consequence and the necessary effect of His beauty; *dharma* and family responsibilities are no more of importance. In 33, 27f, King Parīkṣit asks:

'Since Bhagavān has descended in order to establish *dharma* and destroy *adharma*, how can he . . . act in exactly the opposite way, by touching the wives of others?'[184]

The king is told *inter alia* that Kṛṣṇa is not affected by what his *guṇa*-body does. . .

[179] He uses the word Bhagavān, speaking to the *gopīs* about himself in the third person, thus pretending to be a mortal.

[180] 82, 42f: *nūnaṃ bhūtāni Bhagavān yunakti viyunakti ca (42) vāyur yathā ghanīkaṃ tṛṇaṃ tūlaṃ rajāṃsi ca/saṃyojyâkṣipate bhūyas tathā bhūtāni bhūtakṛt (43).*

[181] E.g., 35, 26: *līlā*; 33, 37: *krīḍā.*

[182] 29, 25f: *duḥśīlo durbhago vṛddho jaḍo rogy adhano 'pi vā/patiḥ strībhir na hātavyo lokêpsubhir apātakī (25) asvargyam ayaśasyaṃ ca . . . jugupsitaṃ ca sarvatra aupapatyaṃ kula-striyāḥ (26).*

[183] 29, 28: *vipriyam*; compare v. 30: *priyêtaram iva.*

[184] 33, 27f: *saṃsthāpanāya dharmasya praśamāyêtarasya ca / avatīrṇo hi Bhagavān* (27) *sa kathaṃ . . . pratīpam ācarad . . para-dārâbhimarśanam?* (28) The verses allude to BhG IV, 7f (*supra* p. 54).

But this whole discussion of the ethical implications of the *gopīs'* and Kṛṣṇa's behaviour—in a way the logical climax of the confrontation between the events depicted and their ideological implications, and normative values—must be seen in the context of those pieces of speculation which the author of the BhP has derived from the normative ideology, which at his time had become the *advaita-Vedānta*. At the same time, recourse to this ideology allows the BhP to provide a conceptual superstructure for *viraha*, which, as we have seen, has not yet received satisfactory treatment.

5.43 *Projection of* advaita-Vedânta *on to the* gopī-*story*

Hacker has said of the Prahlāda-episode in the BhP that: 'its philosophical teaching agrees with the monistic Vedânta to a great extent'[185] 'but although it shows an unmistakable *leaning towards* the philosophy of the *advaita* school, yet it does not appear to be simply *identical* with any branch of this school.'[186] Moreover, Hacker claims that the emphasis placed on bhakti by the BhP would oppose an extreme illusionism:

> But theism and bhakti do not allow for a heightening of monism and illusionism up to those extremes which were customary in the school of Śaṅkara: in the most radical monism the interest in the vis-à-vis of the soul to the god, and in the emotion of devotion which is stressed by the Bhāgavata [–Purāṇa], is lost.[187]

This statement has been challenged by Gail:

> This interpretation cannot assume universal validity. Bhakti need not be connected with a personal god; it can be directed—even emotionally—towards one's own *ātman* whose unity with God was experienced.[188]

[185] 1959, p. 125: *'die Philosophie . . . sehr weitgehend mit dem monistischen Vedānta übereinstimmt.'*

[186] Ibid., p. 126: *'aber wenn sie sich auch unverkennbar an die Schulphilosophie der Advaitisten* anlehnt, *so ist sie doch wohl mit keiner Richtung dieser Schule einfach identisch.'*

[187] Ibid: *'Der Theismus und die Bhakti lassen aber eine Steigerung des Monismus und Illusionismus bis zu den Extremen, die in der Śaṅkaraschule üblich waren, nicht zu: im radikalsten Monismus verliert das Gegenüber der Seele zu dem Gott und die Emotion der Hingabe, auf die das Bhāgavata so großen Wert legt, jedes Interesse.'*

[188] 1969, p. 93: *'Diese Auffassung kann keine grundsätzliche Geltung beanspruchen. Die Bhakti muß nicht an einen persönlichen Gott gebunden sein; sie kann sich, sogar emotional, auf den eigenen Ātman richten, dessen Einheit mit Gott erfahren wurde.'*

No attempt will be made here to delineate the full philosophical system professed in the BhP, nor shall I even try to specify the degree to which monism and illusionism have been developed in this *purāṇa*. But even on the basis of the limited material presented here, it appears possible to illuminate Hacker's and Gail's problems. Both, it would seem, assume a logical or systematic philosophical link between bhakti (*Emotion der Hingabe*) and monism (*Einheit mit Gott*). But having already noticed the extent to which the author of the BhP has accumulated and merely formally combined material from very divergent sources, we should not uncritically presume any such logical harmony between the two complexes.

Let us begin with the *purāṇa*'s philosophical interpretation of the *gopīs*' experiences. In view of the ViP treatment, it does not surprise us to find the model of *yoga* applied here too. 'One girl . . . was seated there like a *yogī*, immersed in bliss'.[189] A similar comparison is made to *sannyāsins*: 'having shaken off all duality and *dharma*'.[190] But another passage shows that the author does not mean these comparisons to be rhetorical.

> With their thoughts fixed on [physical] union with Me, they were not aware of what were, here and there, their own selves, as the sages in *samādhi* (do not know) their phenomenal person (*nāma-rūpa*), and as the rivers enter the water of the ocean, they entered Me . . . On account of their attachment, in hundreds and thousands they obtained me as the highest *brahman*, [although] these women knew Me [merely as] their lover and not in My essence.[191]

This passage makes it clear that the 'attachment' of the *gopīs* is a legitimate alternative method of becoming identical with *brahman*. At the same time, *brahman is* Kṛṣṇa,[192] and the identity is the result of a process, not an ontological *stasis*. But even in Book X we find a number of references to a monistic relation between Kṛṣṇa

[189] 32, 8: *kācit . . . āste . . . yogîvânanda-samplutā*; compare 21, 14.

[190] 47, 18: *°vidhūta-dvandva-dharmā*.

[191] XI, 12, 12f: *tā nâvidan mayy anuṣaṅga-baddha-dhiyaṇ svam ātmānam adas tathêdam | yathā samādhau munayo 'bdhi-toye nadyaḥ praviṣṭa iva nāma-rūpe* (12) . . . *jāram a-svarūpa-vido 'balāḥ | brahma māṃ paramaṃ prāpuḥ saṅgāc chata-sahasra-śaḥ* (13) See Śrīdhara's commentary for attempts to bring some order into the syntax, and to determine the meanings of *svam*, *ātma* (Śrīdhara suggests 'body'), *adas* and *idam*.

[192] Thus we are dealing with a form of theistic *advaita*: *brahma* is identical with the personal god, and then conceived of as the one real; compare 5.234, note 56.

and the *gopīs*. Thus we are told that they obtain *tan-maya-tā* 'the state of consisting of Him, of being Him'.[193] Very frequent is the expression *tad-ātmika* 'having Him as the self'.[194] We hear of *aikya* 'oneness',[195] and one verse plays with one of the *mahāvākyas*: 'I am He'.[196]

However, the monism expressed here implies other trends towards invalidating the phenomenal level of the *gopīs*' love. The body, consisting of the three *guṇas*, becomes meaningless compared with the state of *brahman*:

> They united with Him, the highest *ātman*, and abandoned their bodies consisting of the *guṇas*, since all their bonds had been destroyed.[197]

Kṛṣṇa, in his message sent through Uddhava, refers to this incident, when he advises them:

> When you fix your whole mind, all its functions [in relation to the sense-impressions] having ceased, on me, and when you constantly remember me, you will soon reach me. Those girls who had to stay in Vraja and could not come to the *rāsa* which I was playing in the forest, obtained me by means of thinking of my power.[198]

In the same message Kṛṣṇa explains:

> You are not at all separated from me for I am the *ātman* of the universe; as one finds in [all] beings the [five] elements, thus I am the substrate of the mind, . . . senses, and the *guṇas*. In myself, by myself, I create, maintain, and destroy [the universe which is] myself, by means of my own *māyā* which consists of the elements, senses, and *guṇas*.[199]

[193] 21, 20 and 29, 15.

[194] For example, 30, 2f, 14, 43.

[195] 29, 15.

[196] 30, 3: *asāv aham*. Compare ViP 12: 'I am Kṛṣṇa'; the present version resembles closer the *mahāvākyas aham brahmâsmi* (*BṛhadUp* I, 4, 10) and the famous *tat tvam asi* (*ChandUp* VI, 8, 7).

[197] 29, 11: *tam eva paramâtmānam . . . saṅgatāḥ jahur guṇa-mayaṃ deham . . . prakṣīṇa-bandhanāḥ|*

[198] 47, 37f: *mayy āveśya manaḥ kṛtsnaṃ vimuktâśeṣa-vṛtti yat|anusmarantyo māṃ nityam acirān mām upaiṣyatha* (37) *yā mayā krīḍatā rātryāṃ vane 'smin Vraja āsthitāḥ|alabdha-rāsāḥ . .mâpur mad-vīrya-cintayā* (38)–*Mā is Vedic for māṃ*; the instrumentals *mayā*, etc., depend on *rāsa*, 'with me'.

[199] 47, 29ff: *bhavatīnāṃ viyogo me na hi sarvâtmanā kvacit|yathā bhūtāni bhūteṣu . . . tathâhaṃ sa manaḥ- . .-indriya-guṇâśrayaḥ ||30|| ātmany evâtmānaṃ sṛje hanmy anupālaye|ātma-māyânubhāvena bhūtêndriya-guṇâtmanā ||31||* — Thus Kṛṣṇa identifies his *māyā* with what in classical Sāṃkhya would be *prakṛiti*.

In other words, not only are the *gopīs* identical by their *ātmans* with Kṛṣṇa the *paramâtman*, but their whole physical, mental, etc. being is identical with Kṛṣṇa, in so far as the whole created order is nothing but a manifestation of himself, through *māyā*. Thus it is said that Kṛṣṇa resorts to his *yogamāyā* when sporting with the *gopīs*,[200] and that his body is but for the sake of play: 'He who moves in the hearts of the *gopīs* . . . and all corporeal beings, here took on a visible body in play.'[201]

The nature of this play, this *līlā*, and of the *māyā* enacting it is such that it has no reality separate from Kṛṣṇa:

> Embracing them, stroking them with his hands, with affectionate looks and smiles and unrestrained sport, Kṛṣṇa thus took his pleasure with the beauties of Vraja, *just as a child plays with his mirrored image*.[202]

In the final analysis, the whole *līlā*, including its actors, are but Kṛṣṇa, who very frequently in the BhP is thus defined as *ātmârāma* 'who sports with himself', literally 'whose pleasure-garden is the self',[203] and that without any discernible motive, since 'all his desires are fulfilled'.[204]

I think it has become clear by now in what sense the BhP may be considered an ideological *opus universale*: its treatment of the *gopī* episodes spans the whole spectrum from Hv sensuality and Āḻvār emotionalism, via the *yoga* of the ViP, to the extreme of *advaita* and illusionism (a new feature on the ideological scene). It is difficult to imagine what kind of a person the author could have been, maintaining in himself this incredible tension between intense emotionalism and monistic and theistic illusionism. But however incongruous this enormous edifice may appear to us, it contains stimuli and inspiration which remained operative for the following thousand years.

[200] 29, 1: *yoga-māyām upāśritaḥ*. Compare 33, 38 where he fools the *gopas* with replica *gopīs*.

[201] 33, 36: *gopīnām . . . sarveṣām eva dehinām/yo 'ntaś carati so . . . krīḍanenêha deha-bhāk//*

[202] 33, 17: *pariṣvanga-karabhimarsa-snigdhekṣaṇôddāma-vilāsa-hāsaiḥ/reme Ramêśo Vraja-sundarībhir yathârbhakaḥ sva-pratibimba-vibhramaḥ//*

[203] 29, 42; 30, 35 (there also: *ātmarata* 'dto'); 32, 19; 33, 20. 33, 24: *svayaṃ svaratir* 'dto'; 33, 26: *ātmany avaruddha-sauratah* 'who has pleasure enclosed in himself/his own self'.

[204] For example, 32, 19; 47, 47: *āpta-kāma*.

5.5 Evaluation

Section 1.2 provided a purely functional list of the elements which constitute the structure of 'emotional Kṛṣṇa bhakti'. We may now attempt to arrive at a definition of this form of devotion in terms of the inner coherence of these elements. This will help us to demarcate the borders of Kṛṣṇa emotionalism, as it was developed by the Āḻvārs and adopted by the *Bhāgavata-Purāṇa*, in relation to other forms of religion. A definitely *personal* absolute being, endowed with qualities (distinguished thereby from a *nirguṇa brahman* and even more elusive absolutes like *nirvāṇa or śūnyatā)* is believed to manifest himself in media like the temple image, mythical incarnations, the human heart, etc. and to stimulate a human response through temple worship, poetry, recollection of the mythical exploits, and love. Primarily man's *emotions* are the recipients of the stimuli from the manifestations, and consequently a conscious, active cultivation of these same areas of the personality, viz. the aesthetic, erotic, and ecstatic faculties, is the appropriate mode for the response to be expressed in (unlike other forms of devotion, e.g. purely ritual or intellectual[205]). This twofold cosmos of symbols, through which the absolute is manifested and the devotional response expressed, allows the *bhakta*, as a whole human being, to relate, here and now, to the absolute. But at the same time, these symbols are dynamic in that they stimulate, and are made to express, a longing for immediate 'union' with the absolute, a fulfilment of which is nevertheless impossible. Thus the very frustration of the emotions' desire to meet the absolute behind the symbols becomes for the *bhakta* the closest possible encounter with the absolute; this is 'separation' on the mystical plane. When expressed in mythical or poetic images, this painfully incomplete experience of Kṛṣṇa, the absolute, appears as the separation of lovers.

[205] By no means am I implying that emotional bhakti expresses a conscious rejection of man's intellectual, mental faculties. To write the kind of poetry typical of the Major Āḻvārs, to achieve an *opus universale* like the *Bhāgavata-Purāṇa*, not to speak of Nammāḻvār's theological hymns, certainly represent *intellectual* achievements. Frequently we have encountered references to *yoga* in our sources; in so far as *yoga* can be described as involving the 'mental' faculties, viz. on account of the *buddhi's* or *ātman's* potential *jñāna*, 'meditational insight', these show the acceptance of mental faculties. The difference lies in the fact that the emotions, fed by the senses, are here the primary *locale* and means of religious experience.

The psychological aspect, 'to suffer in separation on account of Māyōn's *māyā*', is the outcome of an ontological situation: 'he is impossible to see in his true nature'.[206] However, historically speaking, this ontological facet of separation must be regarded as the result of two different forms of religion which met and merged in the South. Our study has revealed as typically Northern the concept of a transcendental absolute which is 'so subtle you cannot comprehend it; far off it stands',[207] and as characteristic of Tamil religious sentiments the emotional approach towards religion. The formula 'impossible to see', which evolved with the Āḻvārs, describes the fusion of the two attitudes: the transcendental remoteness is conceived of in much stronger terms *because* emotionally the *bhakta* fails to 'unite' with him fully. By withdrawing the senses into his *ātman*, away from the phenomena of this world, and discarding all emotions through complete indifference, it was possible for the *yogī* fully to realize the transcendental, absolute state of being (not just *kaivalya*, or *brahman*, but even Kṛṣṇa[208])—even here and now, as a *jīvanmukta*. But by actualizing all the potentials of the senses and the emotions it was discovered that the ultimate experience could only be described as 'separation'. Clearly, Kṛṣṇa emotionalism *de facto* questions one of the fundamental axioms of Indian religious thought and sentiment. Implicitly the question is asked whether yogic *samādhi* alone, or the totality of man's experiences, possesses validity in a 'religious', that is ultimate, sense. In the *Bhāgavata-Purāṇa* we can detect that a conscious awareness of this basic question is emerging. The introduction of the *advaita* principle of the ultimate unity of all being may be interpreted as an attempt philosophically to answer the question by relegating 'separation' to the realm of the phenomena. But was this a real answer?

Those very same sources which suggested a purely philosophical solution to the *gopīs*' suffering in terms of *yoga* (Br/ViP) or *advaita* (BhP) revealed through their literary treatment of the episodes that such a solution did not altogether remove a fundamentally human

206 3rdAnt 83: *avaṉ kāṇp' ariyaṉ*. Compare 3rdAnt 82: *uṇarv' ariyaṉ* 'impossible to understand'.

207 BhG 13, 15: *sūkṣmatvāt tad avijñeyaṃ dūra-stham*.

208 For example, BhG 12, 4: *saṃniyamyêndriya-grāmam . . . te prāpnuvanti mām eva* 'who hold in check the complex of their senses, . . . attain to me'.

experience, that of 'separation'. The lament of the *gopīs* at Kṛṣṇa's departure for Mathurā (Br/ViP Nos. 50–70), and the questions they ask Balarāma (Nos. 71–80) show that the author, in spite of his conscious interpretation of their love as *yoga*, could not discard their separation as a meaningless human experience. The fact that he added these two passages to the account of the *Harivaṃśa* (which knows of no final *viraha* of the *gopīs*), and his highly sympathetic and poetically effective rendering of them, surely indicate that he sensed in this separation some ultimate significance. Much more pronounced, and affecting more directly the character of personal devotion, appears this tension in the *Bhāgavata-Purāṇa*; in fact so pronounced that the work seems to fall apart through it. In the *final analysis*, the *purāṇa* tells us, Vṛndāvana, the *gopīs*, and Kṛṣṇa's love-making with them are but the reflection of Kṛṣṇa himself upon the mirror of *māyā*; all the events are nothing but the games he plays, like a child with his own reflected image.[209] But what does this 'final analysis' mean? In spite of the teachings which the *gopīs* receive (note that BhP adds the meeting with Uddhava and with Kṛṣṇa on Kurukṣetra), their separation is not eliminated. In their songs, which the author wrote by utilizing Āḻvār material, they express a profoundly physical longing for Kṛṣṇa such as is nowhere to be found in our other Sanskrit sources. Would all this not indicate that also for the author of the BhP this experience of separation was something more meaningful than his own 'final' philosophical analysis would allow for? Such a suspicion is strengthened by two further considerations. First, it would be surprising, if at least one of the authors of our sources which refer to *yoga* had not personally obtained *samādhi*; yet none of the sources discussed, even those which make explicit reference to *yoga*, resolve the tension between 'union' and 'separation'. Does this not suggest that yogic *samādhi* need not always imply a monistic experience? Secondly, and I consider this the most important aspect of the problem, however much the *gopīs*, or the girl, may be treated as 'ideal *bhakta*', nowhere in our material have we found an expression of '*final* union'. Surely, we have vivid descriptions of a temporary union: the *rāsa* dance and the love-making; a girl exclaims 'I myself have created the world!',[210]

[209] BhP X, 33, 17; see note 202 above.
[210] See TVM V, 6.

'he filled my inside',[211] and her friend suspects 'she must have plunged into the favours of Appaṉ'.[212] We also have the Southern myth about Kṛṣṇa's 'uniting with Piṉṉai'. But in each case, some modification is introduced which turns this temporary union into separation. On the mythical plane, Kṛṣṇa leaves for Mathurā, never to return to Vraja; the mother of the girl who claims identity with Viṣṇu invalidates this claim by considering her daughter 'possessed'; the girl whose inside is filled with Kṛṣṇa has to add that 'he remains hidden in it', while her mother speaks of the girl's pain, thinking that she has lost her mind; the girl's friend indicates her suffering by wondering what she can do for her. Finally, the Piṉṉai episode is not explored by the Āḻvārs, which must suggest that this myth was felt to be incongruous with the emotions of 'separation'. Just as Āṇṭāḷ wakes up after her dream in which she united in marriage with Viṣṇu, all these instances show that separation is felt to be a more fundamental or universal principle than 'union'. The personal experiences which express themselves by means of these mythical and poetic symbols never appear to come to rest in a 'final union', not even in anticipation ('this is what it will be like after death in the state of *mukti*. . .'). All this would suggest that the typically Northern yogic drive towards union in final *samadhi* was reduced to being one component in a more complicated situation, under the impact of a Southern understanding of reality which could conceive of Māyōṉ only in terms of an unresolved dialectic,[213] as 'union *and* separation' of lovers.[214]

It will not be generally accepted that these are the questions to which my analysis of the material has led. Not only will the staunch *advaitin* refuse to consider poetic imagery and its analysis, or the emotions, to be of any 'real', religious significance; the idea that a mystical merger with the absolute is the essence of 'Hinduism'

[211] See TVM V, 5.

[212] See TVM VIII, 9.

[213] Let us not forget that something like this dialectic is at least *in nucleo* implied in the *Gītā*. The *ātman* may merge through spiritual exercise into *brahman*, but Kṛṣṇa, as 'the base supporting *brahman*' (*brahmaṇo . . pratiṣṭhā*, 14, 27), transcends this experience, and in fact throws the 'integrated man' back into phenomenal existence, to accomplish, as his desinterested instrument, his cosmic designs ('and then get busy with your works', 2, 48).

[214] TVM VI, 3, 4: *puṇarcci pirivu*.

has convinced followers in far wider circles.[215] But such value judgements cannot be dealt with through rational arguments, and I shall not attempt to do so. What I am suggesting here is the possibility that from *within* the Southern religious experience—and I mean the totality of emotional experiences, not simply inherited dogmas and beliefs in 'God'—Upaniṣadic *advaita* became envisaged in a wider context which could be formulated only in a dialectical manner. I am suggesting that for the bhakti poets whose works I have been analysing not only did the latent potential of the *buddhi* or *ātman*—actualized through a *yoga* in which the senses and emotions are eliminated—possess an ultimate, religious significance, but also the latent potentials of the senses and emotions (which could be actualized through emotional bhakti). Both approaches share a drive towards union with the absolute, but the second realizes that this can only be dialectical since separation remains implied. Emotional bhakti would thus throw an entirely new light on the significance of the *bhakta*'s physical existence: the very fact that his emotional drive to unite is frustrated in 'separation' reconfirms the basic validity of his full human existence, his 'anthropocentrism', his 'flesh and blood'.

If it could be accepted that what has appeared here as the emotion of 'separation' is in fact a particular understanding of human existence, the present study would have achieved something more than delineating the historical developments of a particular form of religion and establishing a textual link between the BhP and the Āḻvārs. We could have identified a fundamental motive behind a struggle that runs right through medieval Hinduism and expresses itself in the many attempts to formulate 'modified' forms of *advaita* Vedânta. This motive would be that, since a particular religious approach (emotionalism) had revealed 'separation' as the basic relationship between man and the absolute, the totality of being could not simply be subsumed in *one* ultimate principle, and that an element of 'separation' (philosophically 'differentiation') had to be assumed as essential to the nature of the absolute itself. In

[215] Thus Michell, himself an architect, tells us that 'the Hindu temple serves as a reminder of impermanence, a notion that implies a turning away from the present illusory world in an effort to surmount and to transcend it. Though the temple with its art may be indispensable for the rituals of worship, it marks only a transitory stage in the journey from the temporal to the eternal.' (1977, pp. 67f).

this case, the fact that all these forms of 'modified' or 'dialectical' *advaita* postulate a personal absolute who is conceived of in mythical forms and assumed to be known solely from revealed scriptures, could only be regarded as a *secondary* motive, and the conventional description of the struggle between strict and 'modified' forms of *advaita* as a contrast between 'reason/verifiable experience' and 'belief/dogma/myth' would lose much of its usefulness. The primary contrast would be between different types of human experience, different attitudes towards, and interpretations of, reality, and different emphases on which elements in the complex structure of man are significant.

5.6 The impact of the BhP on the secular poetic tradition III: AD 1000 to 1205.

In section 2.5 we looked *inter alia* at poems from the two earliest Sanskrit anthologies, the *Subhāṣitaratnakośa* (*c.* AD 1100) and the *Saduktikarṇâmṛta* (AD 1205), which could reasonably be assumed to belong to a date earlier than *c.* 1000. The fact that none of these poems showed any influence from the BhP version of the *gopī* story is no surprise in view of the results we have obtained concerning the date of that *purāṇa*. Now, both anthologies contain further poems on the *gopīs* which presumably[216] belong to the period between AD 1000 and 1205, and a brief analysis of this material will throw more light on the situation of Kṛṣṇaism in Northern India. Moreover, the two earliest *termini ad quos* for the BhP are provided by two Northern works which suggest AD 1050, and we may wonder whether any of these poems in the two anthologies also shows the influence of the BhP during this period.

It is however a poem outside the *gopī*-cycle which is of particular interest to us, since it can be regarded almost as another document providing a *terminus ad quem* for the BhP: (1) Ska 251, quoted anonymously.[217] Already Bhoja has the poem, and thus it must have been composed before AD 1080 (Bhoja lived c. AD 1000-

[216] That means: while the date of the compilation of the anthology is always a safe *terminus ad quem*, it is possible, particularly for anonymous poems or those with obscure or doubtful ascription of authorship, to belong to a much earlier date.

[217] The stanza is found *Sarasvatīkaṇṭhâbharaṇa* V. 23; also in *Kṛṣṇakarṇâmṛta* II, 65.

1080). It mentions the episode described in BhP X, 8, 33-44: Balarāma accuses Kṛṣṇa of having eaten mud, and Yaśodā, looking into his mouth, sees the whole universe in it.

I shall now provide a brief survey of the remaining thirty-nine poems which deal with the *gopīs*.[218]

A first group of poems is definitely earlier than AD 1100, since they are all quoted in the Srk.

(2) Srk 136 by Puṣpāka: Hari longs for the past pleasures of Rādhā's love.
(3) Srk 147 by Vaiddoka (quoted in six later works): Kṛṣṇa's face is reflected on Rādhā's breast.
(4) Srk 980 by Ḍimboka: pilgrims sing about Rādhā's love.
(5) Srk 109 (here and in later anthologies anonymous, but Ska 277 Śubhāṅka): Kṛṣṇa is scolded by a *gopī*.
(6) Srk 110 (also Ska 284, Pv 256, all anonymous).
(7) Srk 122 (anonymous): a *gopī* searched a whole night in vain for Kṛṣṇa.
(8) Srk 819 (anonymous): a *gopī* refuses to confess her love-making with Kṛṣṇa.
(9) Srk 131 by Śubhāṅka (also Ska 263 and Pv 252, same ascription; and *Kṛṣṇakarṇâmṛta* II, 70): Rādhā is made jealous by his memories of Sītā.

A second group of poems is found only in Ska, but could be earlier than AD 1100, if the ascription can be relied on.

(10) Ska 293 by Śubhāṅka (also Pv 4): on his lovemaking with the *gopīs*.
(11) Ska 299 by the same (also Pv 267): Rādhā's presence is tempting Kṛṣṇa while lifting the Govardhana.
(12) Ska 269 by Cakrapāṇi: young Kṛṣṇa is still too embarrassed to let the *gopīs* know his desires.
(13) Ska 281 by Lakṣmīdhara.

All remaining poems must be earlier than AD 1205, the date at which the *Saduktikarṇâmṛta* was compiled. Since Śrīdhara-dāsa, who compiled the anthology, worked at the court of Lakṣmaṇasena (latter part of the twelth century AD) in Bengal, a considerable number of poems included in the anthology are by various court

[218] It is clearly beyond the scope of this brief survey to provide translations and other details for all the poems. Only the six poems which show influence from the BhP will be discussed.

poets, and some are ascribed to the king himself. The Senas were Vaiṣṇavites, and are said to have come from the South.[219]

(14) Ska 259 by Umāpatidhara (also Pv 148): reference to Rādhā.
(15) Ska 273 the same (also Pv 259): he looks at Rādhā.
(16) Ska 274 the same: he mentions a secret tryst to the *gopīs*.
(17) Ska 283 the same (also Pv 5, but 'Hara').
(18) Ska 301 the same (also Pv 371): Hari longs for the past love of the *gopis*.
(19) Ska 302 by Śaraṇa (also Pv 369): Hari longs for the past love of Rādhā.
(20) Ska 303 the same (also Pv 370): as No. 18.
(21) Ska 2054 the same (also Pv 343, but 'Daśaratha'): reference to his lovemaking with the *gopīs*.
(22) Ska 270 by Lakṣmaṇasena (also Pv 206): he is made to take Rādhā home.
(23) Ska 272 the same (also Pv 202): traces of his love-making with Rādhā.
(24) Ska 282 the same (also Pv 260).

A further group of poems is ascribed to various poets about whom nothing else is known. This would suggest that the majority of these were local poets from Bengal and fairly contemporary with the compiler. [220]

(25) Ska 254 by Divākara-datta (also Pv 135, but without -datta): he enjoys the freedom of childhood.
(26) Ska 255 by Vanamālī (also Pv 136): the *gopīs*' pleasure.
(27) Ska 266 by bhaṭṭa Śālīya Pītâmbara: he entrances the women.
(28) Ska 268 by Vardhamāna (rather different versions in other works): the *gopīs* are fickle.
(29) Ska 275 by ācārya Gopīka (also Pv 205, but 'Hara'): he fails to meet Rādhā.
(30) Ska 285 by Keśara-kolīya Nāthoka (Pv 261, but only the last name).
(31) Ska 300 by Śaṅkara or Jayadeva: he makes Rādhā uncover her breast.
(32) Ska 306 by Nīla (also Pv 375): the *gopīs* send a message to Kṛṣṇa in Dvārakā.

[219] On Karnataka as the original provenance of the Senas see Goetz, 1963, p. 98; Gonda, 1963, p. 151.

[220] That is, if we can apply Ingalls's results for the *Subhāṣitaratnakośa* (1965, p. 32) to this anthology.

(33) Ska 310 by Vīra-sarasvatī (also Pv 368): similar, but to Mathurā.
(34) Ska 2055 by Keśaṭa[221] (also Pv 345, but 'Moṭaka').

Finally, there are six anonymous poems:

(35) Ska 271 (also Pv 201): traces of his lovemaking with Rādhā.
(36) Ska 286 (also Pv 240): he sings in separation.
(37) Ska 290 (also *Kṛṣṇakarṇâmrta* I, 106): reference to Rādhā and his flute.
(38) Ska 305: as No. 18.
(39) Ska 307 (also Pv 374, but 'Govardhanâcārya): as No. 32.
(40) Ska 309 by 'Pañcatantrakṛt' (also Pv 376): Hari sighs when receiving a message from the *gopīs*.

In sixteen out of the thirty-nine poems, Rādhā is mentioned, while the *rāsa* dance (typical of the Br/ViP and then the BhP) is altogether ignored. Surely this is further convincing evidence for the hypothesis that we are dealing here with an independent Kṛṣṇaite tradition. The *gopīs*' *viraha* is referred to in no more than four poems; but all references are in the form of messages addressed to, and in fact received by, Kṛṣṇa who is now living in Mathurā and Dvārakā respectively. Thus even here no direct purāṇic model exists. On the other hand, Hari's own *viraha* from the *gopīs* is dealt with in seven poems; such an emphasis on the male point of view is altogether missing in our other sources. We may now look at the following six poems in greater detail, because they mention themes which are typical of the BhP version of the *gopī* story and employ a phraseology derived from it: (6), (13), (17), (24), (30), (34).

(6) describes Kṛṣṇa as he returns home in the evening with the cows, playing the flute, and delighting the *gopīs*.
(17) separately mentions his returning in the evening, and the flute's attraction for the deer in the forest.
(13), (24) and (30) all describe (with increasing complexity) Kṛṣṇa's appearance when playing the flute; (13) has the *gopīs* listen to it, (24) introduces Rādhā, and (30) paraphrases Kṛṣṇa as 'Rādhā's lover'.
(34) mentions that the enraptured cows listened to the praise sung by the *gopīs* of Kṛṣṇa, also mentioning the flute.

[221] If this ascription were correct, the poem might be as early as the ninth century AD (since a Keśaṭa is referred to already by Yogêśvara, Srk 1733?). But Pv throws doubt on this ascription, just as it is doubtful, whether Yogêśvara wrote Srk 1733.

(24) and (30) (also (13ab) are very close. parallels of BhP X, 35, 2.[222] In (34) the phrase *śṛṇvad-vaktraṃ skhalita-kavalam go-kulam* can be compared with BhP X, 35, 5: *-gāvo danta-daṣṭa-kavalā dhṛta-karṇā*. (6) is possibly the earliest among these poems (before 1100), and we may compare the following phrases:

a: *ahni śithile vyāvartayan go-kulam* (compare No. 17, a: *sāyam vyāvar-tamānâkhila-surabhi-*)	*kṛtsna-go-dhanam upohya dinânte* (BhP X, 35, 22b)
b: (*barhâpīḍakam*) *go-dhūli-dhūmram*	*khura-rajaś-churita-srak* (ibid. 23a)
c: *śrānto 'pi ramyâkṛtir*	*śrama-rucâpi* (ibid)
d: *nayanôtsavo*	*utsavaṃ dṛśīnām unnayan* (ibid.)

In Umāpatidhara's poem (No. 17), the following phrases may be compared:

a: (*surabhi-*) *āhvāna*	(*gāḥ*) *āhvayati* (BhP X, 35, 6d8d)
b: *ceto-.-haraṇa*; d: *-mṛga-śreṇayo veṇu-nādaḥ*	*mṛga-veṇu-vādya-hṛta-cetasaḥ* (ibid. 5a)

(1), together with (6), show that already before AD 1100 poems of unknown provenance derived from the BhP, were known in Bengal; (13) may also belong to this group. Furthermore, (17) and (24) tell us that during the latter half of the twelfth century the Sena court was not only familiar with those earlier poems, but also cultivated an independent poetic treatment of BhP themes. This is important for the historical analysis of the *Gītagovinda*, whose author Jayadeva was one of the court poets of Lakṣmaṇasena. Finally, (30) and (34) indicate that the BhP was known outside the court also. Only one out of these six poems connects Rādhā with material typical of the BhP.[223] But it is more surprising that in such a pronouncedly 'Rādhāite' environment as the Sena court *only* one poem illus-

[222] See below, Appendix XII, No. **24**. Both (24) and (30 are so close to the wording and description of the BhP that they can be considered almost as Sanskrit paraphrases.

[223] Again, in section 2.5 we found only one example—note that it is from Bengal!—of the introduction of Rādhā into a theme derived from the Vi/BrP passage S21. Our present (30) can hardly be called a 'combination', since Rādhā is not introduced to the plot of the poem, but figures only in the paraphrase of Kṛṣṇa's name.

strates this combination. Altogether, this survey has shown that from the eleventh century AD onwards the BhP began to influence the poetry of the secular Kṛṣṇaite tradition in the North.[224]

[224] Naturally, this brief survey is no more than one minute facet of the history of the influence of the BhP. Even for Bengal during this same period it is incomplete, since I have not included the *Gītagovinda* (on which see most recently Siegel, 1978), nor the *Kṛṣṇakarṇâmṛta* (see (1), (9), (37), a work which presents not only considerable textual difficulties but is also very difficult to relate to the Āḻvārs and the BhP. Moreover, I have ignored the possibility that what has been called here 'influence from the BhP' could in fact be an original, independent Sanskrit rendering of Tamil, viz. Aḻvār, motifs. I do not think that this applies to the seven poems discussed here, but it is at least worth noting that (6b) (*go-dhūlî*) agrees less directly with the BhP parallels (see Appendix XII (**23**) than with PâḻTM III, 2, 2; 3, 3: *karṟu ttūḷi*.

PART SIX

PART SIX

Emotional Kṛṣṇa bhakti: prolegomena to an evaluation

These women sang with a sweetness produced by emotions. With Dāmodara as object of their affection, they became happy in Vraja.[1]

The fortunate women of Vraja, their thoughts and their minds fixed on Him, enjoyed themselves during the days by singing about Kṛṣṇa's *līlā*.[2]

These two verses are separated by more than half a millennium, and perhaps a thousand miles in space. Yet they share a common theme, a theme which we have traced from its early and fragmented beginnings up to that point in its history when, infused with a new spirit, it becomes available to the whole of medieval India. Unaware of those who had given birth to this new religious attitude, and unaware that what the BhP allowed them to catch a glimpse of was but the tip of an iceberg, Āḻvār mysticism, other regions and milieux eagerly absorbed these suggestions of an 'anthropocentric religion'. However impoverished or dilute the form in which this facet appeared to Northern India, it was a stimulus powerful enough to give rise to emotional Kṛṣṇaism in the North. From the thirteenth century onward, numberless Kṛṣṇa *bhaktas* began to cultivate a form of religion which they mainly derived from the BhP,[3] and which explored the happiness caused by singing about Kṛṣṇa's mysteries. These mysteries, despite their beauty and fascination, aroused also the agony of separation. It would require thousands of pages to discuss those *bhaktas* and their poetic creations, pages which may or may not be written in the future. In the present context however we must turn back to the material which has been presented in our study and attempt to evaluate it. Textual study, historical discussion, and poetic analysis have not given us the respite to pause and contemplate the picture as a whole.

[1] Hv 63, 29.

[2] BhP X, 35, 26.

[3] I have pointed out certain indications of (textual or oral) influences on the bhakti movement initiated in Bengal by Mādhavendra Purī during the fifteenth century, which lie outside the influence of the BhP; see Hardy, 1974.

We shall attempt to do this, briefly, in the following pages. Continuing, for a moment, the metaphor of looking at a picture, we could say that three or four different angles or positions can be chosen from which we might gain an overall impression. Since it seems reasonable to assume that the post-BhP developments in Northern India constitute one legitimate position of evaluation, we may conveniently start with these. For the sake of clarity, we shall begin with a more external and factual study of these developments (6.1), and then turn to the underlying problems (6.2.). It would then be tempting to step further back and compare the picture of emotional Kṛṣṇaism with other mystical traditions, but for reasons of competence (not to speak of space) I have yielded to this temptation only to the extent of drawing a very superficial comparative sketch of three Spanish mystics and one Catholic theologian's interpretation of the *Canticle* (6.3). It would be equally tempting to make use of the insights of psychology to evaluate Kṛṣṇa emotionalism, but my competence does not extend beyond the preparation of the basic material. I have nevertheless felt it to be necessary, simply in order to prevent too rash a judgement, to suggest a direction in which emotionalism as a psychological phenomenon could positively be evaluated (6.4).

6.1 Outlines of post-BhP developments[4]

The BhP was introduced to Northern India at a time when Sanskrit culture, though continuing to represent the normative ideology, was losing its influence owing to the emergence of various regional vernacular cultures. It was the period when the modern Indo-Aryan languages began to be employed for literary purposes. Kṛṣṇaism, by its very nature, was more in rapport with these trends, and thus it is not surprising to find that most of Kṛṣṇa bhakti poetry was written in the various vernaculars, some of which were even moulded by the *bhaktas* to become their medium of expression. However, just as the *ācāryas* resorted to Sanskrit for the purpose of formulating Viṣṇuism in philosophical terms, time and again during the following centuries, Kṛṣṇaite philosophical systems

[4] The reader may consult for bibliographical references on medieval Kṛṣṇaism: Gonda, 1963, pp. 115–187; Mishra, 1973 *passim*; Vaudeville, 1974, pp. 97–119. On the philosophical schools: Das Gupta, vols. III and IV.

expressed themselves in Sanskrit and in terms of the Sanskrit theological tradition. Moreover, the *purāṇa* and the *saṃhitā* continued to function as literary genres, employed to give scriptural authority to further Kṛṣṇaite myths and thought. This is illustrated by the late *Brahmavaivarta-Purāṇa*, many late portions in the *Padma-Purāṇa*, and the *Garga-Saṃhitā*, not to speak of the legion of *sthalapurāṇas*. The influence of Sanskrit remained so strong that even in the sixteenth century Bengal Vaiṣṇavism utilized all the classifications and paraphernalia of Sanskrit love poetry for its own poetic creations (the handbook of Bengal Vaiṣṇava poetics is the *Ujjvalanīlamaṇi*; the anthology *Padyâvalī* illustrates its practical application). However, although hardly explored, Kṛṣṇa poetry in the various vernaculars is very much more extensive and shows much greater variety. A few poets may be mentioned here whose works have in fact been collected, studied, or even critically edited: Nāmdev,[5] Mīrā̃ Bāī,[6] Vidyāpati,[7] and Sūrdās[8] (for Marāṭhī, Rājasthānī, Maithilī, and Braj Bhāṣā respectively). Bihārī Lāl (writing in Hindī, seventeenth century) composed another *Sattasaī*, which deals with the love of Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa and illustrates the survival of our oldest Kṛṣṇaite milieu. Veṅkaṭanātha (thirteenth to fourteenth century), who wrote poetry both in Sanskrit and Tamil, deriving his inspiration from the Āḻvārs, the BhP, etc., illustrates this tension between the two cultural complexes of Sanskrit and vernacular traditions. In general, we witness the proliferation of new philosophical systems, sects, and regional traditions. Rāmānuja's *Viśiṣṭâdvaita* soon found its rivals in the philosophical edifices of Madhva's *Dvaita*, Nimbārka's *Dvaitâdvaita*, Vallabha's *Śuddhâdvaita*, and the Bengal Gosvāmīs' *acintyadvaitâdvaita*. As philosophical schools, they always implied social groupings and in fact autonomous 'religions'. We may sense behind the history of these philosophical schools a progressive harmony and interaction between religious thought and practice. While *Viśiṣṭâdvaita* theology had little resemblance to Āḻvār bhakti, Rūpa and Jīva Gosvāmī's theology was in fact the conceptual interpretation of their bhakti. The case of the *Śrīvaiṣṇava* com-

5 *Nāmdev Rāyācī sârth gāthā*, ed. Prahlād Sītārām Subandh, 6 vols., Puṇē, 1949–62.
6 *Mīrābāī kī padâvalī*, ed. Parśurām Caturvedī, Prayāg, 1966.
7 *Songs of Vidyāpati*, ed. and trans. Subhadra Jhā, Benares, 1954.
8 On Sūrdās see Singer, 1968, pp. 173–99; 237.

mentaries on the poetry of the Āḻvārs, which cover a similar period (the classical commentaries on the TVM were written from the twelfth to the sixteenth century), illustrate a reverse process: they progressively moved away from the actual poetic content and lost themselves in esoteric speculations and scholastic subtleties. But we must not forget that this is at the same time a unique example in the history of Hinduism of an intensive theological preoccupation over many centuries with (and via) non-Sanskrit religious material.

Besides the traditional five schools or *sampradāyas*, we find a number of other social groups of Kṛṣṇaites, for example, the Mānbhāvs and Vārkarīs in Mahārāṣṭra, the Rādhāvallabhīs around Mathurā, the Sakhībhāvakas in Calcutta, etc. Most of these, in contradistinction to the five *sampradāyas*, were non- or anti-brahmanical.

With the Āḻvārs we have for the first time in Kṛṣṇaism the religious individual; this continues in medieval India, and a new type of literature develops, viz. hagiography. 'Lives of the Āḻvārs' began to be written from the eleventh and twelfth centuries onward, and for Northern *santas* we have, for example, the works of Mahīpati (eighteenth century), the many 'Lives of Caitanya', and the famous *Bhaktamālā* of Nābhājī (sixteenth century).

As overall characteristics of all these various trends and developments we may mention that Kṛṣṇa constituted the centre of the religious cosmos (not Viṣṇu), that progressively the *gopī* episodes alone among the incidents of the *Kṛṣṇa-carita* stimulated religious imagination (with Rādhā as Kṛṣṇa's favourite *gopī*), and that in a number of respects myth and psychology were transformed into metaphysics and ontology (on this see below).

By the very nature of historical processes, any demarcation line drawn must be arbitrary and artificial, cutting into developments whose proper shape and nature may appear only at a later stage. This applies to the line drawn after the BhP in our present study, and yet the BhP represents a clearer and more marked dividing line than most other religious works written during the long history of Kṛṣṇaism, and to some extent it is legitimate to speak of a post-BhP period. The further history of Kṛṣṇaism is intrinsically linked with this vastly influential work. In fact, most of the further developments may be regarded as solutions to, or struggles with, certain problems raised by that *purāṇa*.

6.2 Some problems raised by the BhP

The BhP introduced a number of songs mainly sung by the *gopīs* and mainly sung in separation from Kṛṣṇa which, as we have seen, illustrate most typically the religious spirit of the work on the phenomenological plane. As songs, they would be sung by the *bhakta*, who would spontaneously relate himself, in some form, to the *gopīs*' situation, without regard to any metaphysical position he might have adopted. The problem now arising from these songs is: how can the *bhakta* enter into the emotions of the *gopīs*, and what would be the significance of this? This problem contains three separate questions:

(1) How is it possible for any person to enter into, or to realize, the emotions of any other person?

(2) How can a man 'turn into a woman'?

(3) How can man, living here and now, enter into the realm of myth?

In terms of the *akattiṇai* tradition employed by some of the Āḻvārs (from whom the BhP adopted the material of its songs), such problems obviously do not exist. They had to arise when the BhP presented this *akattiṇai* approach to an audience unfamiliar with it. *Akam* poetry is precisely the medium by which one person can share the emotions of another, by which a man participates in a woman's emotions, and by which, finally, the Āḻvārs succeed in entering into the emotions of mythical persons. Thus we must ask: how did the Northern Kṛṣṇaite scene deal with the *gopī* songs which caused problems arising from the absence of the *akattiṇai* approach? But before we look at this question, it may be useful to list the various other approaches to the *gopīs*' love we have encountered in the previous pages. Thus for the ViP passage such a problem does not exist, since the *gopīs* are envisaged merely as symbols of intellectual bhakti, as metaphors which on the plane of myth illustrate what any *bhakta* has to do for himself in his own yoga. In various areas of early popular Kṛṣṇaism we have met with folk-dances, popular drama, mimic representations of the bullfight and *kuravai*, etc., all of which constitute means of enacting the *gopī* story. By taking on theatrical rôles and playing the part of the *gopīs*, etc., the problems stated above would not arise. Again in popular areas, some Āḻvārs provided songs for religious ceremonies and ordinary daily events, and this concrete setting, infused

with mythical symbols, allowed for an entrance into the Vṛndāvana mysteries.[9] But the songs of the BhP did not have any such concrete setting, once they were textually transmitted to other milieux, and new solutions had to be found.

6.21 *How can the* bhakta *participate in another person's emotions?*

For our purposes it is obviously not necessary to deal with this question in its general form. It becomes interesting for us when Indian philosophers ask it, because the theoretical answers they formulated affected the Kṛṣṇaite material. The origin of the formulated question lies in the realm of secular Sanskrit poetics. Ānandavardhana (*c.* AD 850) was the first theoretician of poetry to formulate a theory of 'emotional participation', to which Abhinavagupta (*c.* AD 1000) gave the classical form. According to this theory[10] the poetic word possesses the power to 'suggest', and this power of suggestion stimulates in the reader (or the spectator of a drama) *rasa*, an aesthetically transformed experience of the emotions underlying the poem (drama), particularly of the lover and beloved. On the basis of this *rasa* theory, our remaining two questions can easily be answered: since the aesthetic experience styled *rasa* abstracts from any concrete situation (i.e., in our case, the male sex of the reader, or the mythical setting of a poem), any reader can obviously enter into the emotions of the *gopīs* provided they are expressed in a poem capable of suggesting *rasa*. But such a theory in turn gives rise to much more fundamental problems, because *rasa* as defined by it is an aesthetic *secular* experience, not bhakti. It would thus seem that the *rasa* theory, instead of explaining religious emotionalism, deprives it of all its *religious* significance.

But when we recollect what has been said about the ideological situation in India, it will not surprise us to find that normative thinking did in fact attempt to incorporate a metaphysical significance into this secular aesthetic theory. Before the BhP began to be influential in the North, the argument moved along lines very different from those we are interested in: for instance, a concept

[9] See my suggestion that there existed an early form of *dāsī* institution connected with the temple (pp. 474–7); if this is correct, this would be another form of 'living out bhakti', in the image of the *gopīs*.

[10] See R. Gnoli, *The Aesthetic Experience according to Abhinavagupta*, Rome, 1956 (2nd ed. Benares, 1968, Chowkhamba Sanskrit Studies, vol. 62).

śānta-rasa 'aesthetic enjoyment of the sentiment of transcendental peace [owing to the merging into *brahma*]' was introduced into the discussion.[11] Bhoja (*c.* 1050) knew of a *bhakti-rasa*,[12] but there is no evidence that this concept was linked with Kṛṣṇa emotionalism. Jayadeva (*c.* 1175) said in his *Gītagovinda*: 'If by recollecting Hari the mind obtains *rasa*. . .',[13] but the interpretation of this statement is difficult for two reasons: we cannot tell whether the word *rasa* (its ordinary meaning is 'bliss, pleasure') is used here in the technical sense, and since 'recollecting Hari' could be linked with *any* form of bhakti, it is impossible to decide whether we are dealing here with the Southern emotionalism.

The *rasa* theory is for the first time definitely employed with reference to the *gopī* songs of the BhP in a work by the Mahārāṣṭrian writer Vopadeva (*c.* 1265) entitled *Muktāphala* and in its commentary *Kaivalyadīpikā* by the author's patron Hemādri.[14] The idea expressed here is briefly as follows. The classical nine *rasas* (including *śānta*) become transformed into (nine varieties of) *bhakti-rasa* when they are suggested by Kṛṣṇaite poetry; the underlying idea being that any form of mental experience (here secular *rasa*) becomes bhakti when directed towards Kṛṣṇa. Collecting many passages from the BhP (including our *gopī* songs), the work illustrates how all nine *rasas* are exemplified in the *purāṇa*. A similar 'substantialist' interpretation is found in the *Vacchāharaṇa*, a poem in Old Marāṭhī of AD 1316 directly influenced by Vopadeva/Hemādri.[15] Kṛṣṇa is said to 'play the drama of the nine *rasas*'[16] which is illustrated by episodes from the BhP (vv. 50–54). But the interesting point, entering here as a novel feature, is that Kṛṣṇa is said to be himself 'the container of the nine *rasas*'.[17] This is the first indication of a new direction in the theory of *bhakti-rasa*: emotional participation becomes possible not because of the suggestive power of the poetic word, but because of a metaphysical rapport

[11] See Masson/Patwardhan, *Śāntarasa*, Poona, 1969 (= Bhandarkar Oriental Series No. 9).

[12] See Raghavan, 1963 *passim*, and 1967a *passim*.

[13] I, 4: *yadi Hari-smaraṇe sa-rasam mano* . .

[14] Ed. in two volumes Calcutta Oriental Series, No. 5, 1920.

[15] Ed. V. B. Kolate, 1953. Our passage is quoted from Tulpule, *An Old Marāthī Reader*, Poona, 1960, pp. 146f.

[16] V. 55: *nava-rasa-nāṭaka deo khele*.

[17] V. 49: *navā rasāñcē nidhāna*.

between the *bhakta* and the object of his bhakti; this emotional rapport is styled *rasa*. Thus the theologian Vallabha (1481–1533) says: 'When the mind and all the senses have taken on the form of Bhagavān . . . who (which) creates pure bliss, then alone [one possesses] *bhakti-rasa*'.[18] The *advaita* philosopher Madhusūdana Sarasvatī, a junior contemporary of Vallabha, expresses the same idea in greater detail.[19] As lac melts through heat and a seal can be pressed into it to leave a permanent impression, the mind melts in the fire of love towards Bhagavān (the base of the emotions a poem would 'suggest'), and Bhagavān impresses himself on the mind which thereby experiences *bhakti-rasa*. Bhakti in turn is defined here as 'being unable to endure separation, which in the extreme case [may lead to] giving up one's life'—a clear allusion to the *gopī* songs.[20] But perhaps the most impressive speculative edifice founded on a cosmic conception of *bhakti-rasa* was developed by the theologians of Caitanya's school, particularly Rūpa and Jīva Gosvāmī (late sixteenth century).[21] Here *bhakti-rasa* has become the fundamental cosmic principle (combining the psychological and the ontological) which underlies Kṛṣṇa's relation to Rādhā, the world, and the souls. The *bhakta* participates in the emotions of the *gopīs* (the highest form of bhakti), because both his and their love is but the outflow of Kṛṣṇa's *rasa*. There is *viraha* in so far as Kṛṣṇa and Rādhā, the world and the souls are separate entities (ontology) and separated (psychology); but there is union according to the 'unthinkable monism' (*acintyâdvaita*) of the school's philosophical position.

6.22 *How can a male* bhakta *realize a woman's emotion?*

Various solutions to this problem are implied in the *rasa* theories

[18] *Yatra manaḥ-sarvêndriyānām ānanda-mātra-kara-. . Bhagavad-rūpatā, tatra bhakti-rasa eva. Bhaktimārtaṇḍa* p. 102, quoted in Das Gupta, vol. III, p. 352, note 5.

[19] See S. Gupta, *Studies in the Philosophy of Madhusūdana Sarasvatī*, Calcutta, 1966, pp. 195–230.

[20] *Prāṇa-parityāgâvadhi virahâsahiṣṇutā-rūpā. Bhagavadbhakti-rasâyana*, (ed. Benares, 1927) p. 166. Compare BhP X, 29, 11 and X, 47, 38 (quoted 5.43, note 198).

[21] For a general survey see De, *Early History of Vaiṣṇava Faith and Movement in Bengal*, Calcutta, 2nd ed., 1961; pp. 170–224 summaries of Rūpa's *Bhaktirasâmṛtasindhu* and *Ujjvalanīlamaṇi*, and pp. 354–403 summaries of Jīva's *Ṣaṭsandarbha*, *Bhakti-* and *Prīti-sandarbha*.

encountered above, and thus we need not elaborate on them. Here I would like to draw attention to some different approaches which later Kṛṣṇaite developments have expressed. But it might be useful to look at a more fundamental question first, viz. *why* should a man do so?

The whole of the emotional Kṛṣṇaite tradition agrees on one point: of all the *bhaktas* who (in the realm of myth) have encountered Kṛṣṇa, the *gopīs* exemplify the highest possible form of bhakti. That they were women is by no means accidental here, because their sacrifice thus became so much greater than any man could have made (consider, for example, the sacrifice of their honour!). An early treatise on bhakti, the *Nāradabhaktisūtras*[22] (eleventh century?), states in concise *sūtra* style:

> Bhakti is identical with highest love towards Him; Nārada [defines it as] the feeling of greatest agitation when He is not thought of: as [illustrated] by the *gopīs* of Vraja. Even in [their bhakti] the knowledge of His greatness had to be remembered, for otherwise [their love would have been] like that for a [worldly] paramour, since in that [love for a worldly paramour] happiness does not derive from the happiness [given to] Him.[23]

But in a more general metaphysical sense, every human being is like a woman before Kṛṣṇa. The *Īṭu* says:

> When Bhagavān is experienced face to face, He possesses such an overwhelming *maleness* that [the *bhakta*] loses his own male nature and will wear the dress of a woman.[24]

The *Arumpatavurai remarks*:

The following verse may be considered here 'This alone is Vāsudeva; when

[22] P. K. Gode, The *Bhaktisūtras of Nārada*, 1923; Sadananda Sarasvati, *Narada Bhakti Sutras*, Rishikesh, 1952. Gonda, 1963, p. 130 dates it in the tenth century. It is most likely post- BhP (note the references to the *gopīs*, the *ātmarati*, etc.), but if the reference to Śāṇḍilya in *sū.* 18 is to the author of another *bhakti-sūtra* work (equally post-BhP), the *Nārada-sūtras* might be somewhat later than the tenth century.

[23] This is a concatenation of *sūtras* 1f, 19, 21–4: *sā* [= *bhakti* in 1] *tv asmin parama-prema-rūpā* (2); *Nāradas tu . . . tad-vismaraṇe parama-vyākulatā iti* (19); *yathā Vraja-gopikānām* (21); *tatrâpi na māhātmya-jñāna-vismṛty-apavādaḥ* (22); *tad-vihīnaṃ jārāṇām iva* (23); *nâsty eva tasmins tat-sukha-sukhitvam* (24).

[24] *Muppattārāyirampaṭi, ad* TVM I, 4 (p. 166, lines 3f): *etir ttalaiyil (puṃstva)ttaiy aḻittu ppeṇ uṭaiy uṭuttumpaṭiy irē avaṉ uṭaiya (puruṣôttamatvam) iruppatu.*

He manifests Himself, He alone can be called male, the remaining universe, the world governed by Brahmā, etc., is like a woman'.[25]

Although the *Īṭu* specifies that by 'woman' is meant someone totally dependent upon someone else:

[The girl and the bhakta] have no other purpose than to serve him/Him, none but him/Him to take refuge with, . . . are incapable of bearing the pain when he/He is away, since he/He is their sole pleasure and their master, and they are his/His servants,[26]

this is not the only attitude displayed by Hinduism towards the female sex. Contrary to the Buddhist tantras, the mechanism of the created order is attributed to a female force, the *śakti*.[27] In the theology of Caitanya's school, the cosmos evolves through Rādhā, Kṛṣṇa's *śakti*, and in so far as the created order thereby separates from Kṛṣṇa, its relationship to Kṛṣṇa may be said to correspond to, mirror, or perhaps even be motivated by, his mythical/eternal separation from Rādhā and the *gopīs*. Thus the *bhakta* must realize the *gopīs*' love because in it he experiences the whole of cosmic separation and union.

We now turn to the question *how* this can be achieved. The least difficult way of doing so is obviously when it happens in mythology. Thus we have *purāṇic* passages which explain that some of the *gopīs* had been men in a former life who owing to an intense desire for Kṛṣṇa were granted this privilege in order to love Kṛṣṇa even more intensely.[28] Another example of this type of

[25] Ibid., p. 166, lines 6–9 (*sa eva Vāsudevo 'sau sākṣāt puruṣa ucyate / strī-prāyam itarat sarvam jagad Brahma-puraḥ-saram//*) . . . *enṉa kkaṭavat' iṟē*.

[26] Ibid., p. 165 (*an-anyârha-śeṣatva)ttālum (an-anya-śaraṇatva)ttālum, . . . (vyatireka) ttil (dhar)iyāt' oḷikaiyālum, (tad-eka-bhoga)r ākaiyālum, avaṉ (nirvāhaka)ṉ āka ittalai (nirvāhyam) ākaiyālum. . .*

[27] Snellgrove (*The Hevajra Tantra* (London Oriental Series, vol. 6) part I, London, 1959, p. 44) has pointed out the difference between the Buddhist and Hindu *tantras*, in that they posit an active female principle, *śakti*, and a passive one, *prajñā*.

[28] *Padma-Purāṇa Uttarakhaṇḍa* 272, vv. 166f: 'In former times, all the great ṛṣis living in the Daṇḍaka forest, seeing Rāma and Hari there, desired to enjoy them . . They all became women and were born in Gokula. Obtaining Hari through physical passion (*kāma*), they thus found liberation from the ocean of existence.' Rūpa Gosvāmī (*Bhaktirasâmṛtasindhu* I, 2, 300) utilizes the passage in the context of *rāgânuga-bhakti:* 'Those who see the beauty of a sacred *vigraha* or hear of the various *līlās* and on account of it crave to enjoy Him, may use both (*vigraha* or stories) as

mythological explanation is found in the theology of the Caitanya school: one branch of 'theological biographers' interpret Caitanya as the incarnation of Rādhā: in his mysticism of separation they see Rādhā's separation from Kṛṣṇa physically and emotionally incarnate.[29] In a similar manner, Śrīvaiṣṇava hagiography recognizes in Āṇṭāḷ's mysticism not only Bhūmi's incarnation, but also the most complete expression of the *gopīs*' passionate love for Krsna.

When Āṇṭāḷ had become a young girl, she was totally devoted to Bhagavān; like the cowherd girls who were unable to bear separation from Kṛṣṇa she imitated Kṛṣṇa ['s deeds]...[30]

A modern *bhāṇa*[31] describes a curious change of sex: The *viṭa* Vaipañcika is an old brahmin celibate, who is depressed about never having had the fortune of making love to a woman. In sympathy with his cravings, Kṛṣṇa allows him to choose any of his 16,000 queens. But this is no solution, since any woman chosen by the *viṭa* corresponds to some aspect of Kṛṣṇa himself, and the problem is solved only when Kṛṣṇa changes Vaipañcika into a girl and then makes love to her. A recent religious movement, the Sakhībhāvakas, attempted quite literally 'to turn into women' by wearing women's clothes, etc.[32] But we also find other, more

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means [for rāgânuga]. This is possible even for men, as has been revealed in the *Padma-Purāṇa*'. In v. 304 he quotes from the *Mahākūrma* [purāṇa]: 'The sons of Agni . . . obtained womanhood through penance, and as their husband the Cause of the World, the unborn lord Vāsudeva'. Veṅkaṭanātha has Apsarases and goddesses born as *gopīs* (*Yādavábhyudaya* III, 63; VIII, 67ff).

[29] See on this De, 'Caitanya-worship as a cult', in *Indian Culture*, vol. 1, pp. 173-89; reprinted (as pp. 128-42) in *Bengal's Contribution to Sanskrit Literature and Studies in Bengal Vaiṣṇavism*, Calcutta, 1960). See also the work mentioned in note 21, in the Index *sub verbo* 'dual incarnation'. Compare *Caitanyacaritâmṛta Ādi* IV, 227–65.

[30] GPPT p. 29: 'Āṇṭāḷ was born as a partial incarnation of Bhūmi' *Pūmi-ppirāṭṭi (aṃśam) āṉa Āṇṭāḷ . . . (prādurbhav)itt' aruḷa*. The passage translated above pp. 29f: *Āṇṭāḷum (prāpta-yauvan)aiy āy . . . (Bhagavad-viṣaya-prāvaṇya)ttai uṭaiyavaḷ āy . . . (Śrī-Kṛṣṇa-virahásahiṣṇu)kkaḷ āṉa (gopa-kanyak)aikaḷ . . . Kṛṣṇaṉai (anukar)ittu ttarittā ppōlē. . .*

[31] *Kandarpadarpavilāsa* by Bellamkoṇḍa Rāma Rāya (1875-1914) from Andhra, Bapatla, 1910 (Telugu characters). See S.S. Janaki, 1971.

[32] They appeared in Calcutta *c.* 1850. Literature in Gonda, 1963, p. 164, note 42.

sophisticated or 'realistic' solutions. The *Padma-Purāṇa* has a passage in which instruction in something like a spiritual exercise of immersing oneself in the emotions of the *gopīs* is given:

> One should regard oneself as a beautiful girl there [in the eternal Vṛdāvana] among them [the *gopīs*], endowed with an attractive figure and youth, to be a wanton girl; . . . imagining oneself like this, one should serve [Kṛṣṇa and Rādhā] there.[33]

Rūpa Gosvāmī styles a much more elaborate form of such an exercise *rāgânugā bhakti* 'bhakti as [the emotional and meditational exercise of] realizing in oneself the passion [of the *gopīs*]'.[34] In concrete terms this is realized thus:

> One should constantly remember Kṛṣṇa and his beloved [girls] whom he desired, find delight in the various stories about them, and live in Vraja.[35]

6.23 *How does the* bhakta *enter the realm of myth?*

Again, some of the previous methods devised to allow a man 'to turn into a woman' imply the 'turning into a *gopī*'. Therefore I shall mention here some different approaches to the problem. Āṇṭāḷ had already expressed the desire to be taken to Vṛndāvana where Kṛṣṇa sported with the milkmaids;[36] in a later work of Śrīvaiṣṇavism this was elaborated upon. Kūrattāḻvāṉ says in his *Atimānuṣastava*: 'Those places which enjoyed the touch from your foot-steps . . . alas! even today can be visited by fortunate people!'[37] 'I was not born, alas! on those sands which enjoyed your foot-steps . . . and on which the *gopīs* threw down their bodies burning from love!'[38] The desire expressed here, viz. to visit or

[33] *Pātālakhaṇḍa* 83, 7; 11a.

[34] This type of bhakti is discussed *Bhaktirasâmṛtasindhu* I, 2, verses 270–309. The eternal model is styled *rāgâṭmikā bhakti* which the beings of Vṛndāvana illustrate, and which is characterized as 'possession by the chosen [god], possession full of inherent sweetness' (270ff). *Rāga* itself is divided into *kāma*, the fullest possible realization of bhakti, an all-absorbing thirst for sexual enjoyment which only the *gopīs* could achieve (273; 283), and *sambandha* '[other] personal relationships [like friendship]'. Imitating *kāma* is the highest ideal for the earthly *bhakta* (290).

[35] Ibid., 294.

[36] The tenor of NTM XII.

[37] Ed. P. B. Aṇṇaṅkarācāriyar, Kāñcī,[3] 1962, v. 49.

[38] Ibid., 51.

live in the localities which according to the *bhaktas* have in the mythical past seen Kṛṣṇa's sports, increases during the following centuries. An active centre of Kṛṣṇaism arose in Mathurā and Vṛndāvana due to the presence of Nimbārka, Vallabha, Rūpa and Jıva Gosvāmī, etc. and their disciples. It seems to have been in these circles that a new theology of Vṛndāvana evolved: the mysteries which according to the sacred scriptures took place in the mythical past came to be regarded as earthly manifestations of the eternal Vṛndāvana, where beyond space and time Kṛṣṇa enjoys himself in Rādhā's company, eternally. Thus we read in the *Padma-Purāṇa*:

> . . . the beloved girls of Hari are all eternally here (in Vṛndāvana). . . . Just as in the *purāṇas* they have been described in their *manifest līlā*, so they are in their *eternal līlā* in Vṛndāvana. Eternally Kṛṣṇa goes to and returns home from the forest and the cowpens, and leads the cows in the company of his friends, only that he does not have to kill demons [as on earth]. And his beloved girls consider themselves to belong to other men, and make love with their Beloved only in a clandestine manner.[39]

These eternal mysteries are hidden to the human eye, but the *bhakta* can at least live in the earthly Vṛndāvana: to live there became a form of bhakti.[40]

So far we have looked at various solutions which evolved in the course of Kṛṣṇaism to problems which the BhP raised because a Sanskritic environment was unfamiliar with the *akattiṇai* of the Āḻvārs. We may now turn to one of the major problems the BhP itself had struggled with: the incongruity between an emotionalism of separation and a philosophical monism and illusionism. But below the surface of this problem we must recognize a much more fundamental problem: Indian sentiment as such rebelled against anything like 'final *viraha*'. Thus the *Gītagovinda* (a work in which the influence of the BhP cannot be shown) concludes with the reunion of Kṛṣṇa and Rādhā. Certain types of Kṛṣṇaism in Mahārāṣṭra altogether ignored the *gopīs* and concentrated on Rukmiṇī,

[39] *Pātālakhaṇḍa* 83, 3. . .6 Compare Gonda, 1963, p. 163. On Jīva Gosvami's conception of *prakaṭa* and *aṕrakaṭa līlā* see De (op. cit., note 21) pp. 346f; also 291f; 328, 334–42.

[40] Rūpa Gosvāmī recommends the visiting of and preferably the permanent residence in Vṛndāvana in a number of places in his *Bhaktirasâmṛtasındhu*, e.g., I, 2, 75, 92f, 105ff, 235–8. Compare Hardy, 1974, pp. 35f; see Vaudeville, 1976.

the princess whom Kṛṣṇa lawfully wedded. Āḻvār hagiography, although envisaging Āṇṭāḷ's bhakti as exemplifying the *gopīs*' love, ends her *viraha* from Kṛṣṇa by having her getting married to Raṅganātha to be then absorbed in his *vigraha*, although in her own poetry such a marriage took place only in a dream.[41] Indian sentiment clearly found it difficult to cope with a case of *final viraha*, and tried somehow to create a happy ending. However, the main stream of Kṛṣṇaism preserved the theme of *viraha* as the basic context in which bhakti is realized, although the monistic idea of the *ātmarati*, the 'delight in the self/Self', continued to represent the other pole of awareness and of the philosophers' arguments. This may be illustrated from the *Nāradabhaktisūtras*. Nārada quotes the opinion of a certain Śāṇḍilya: '[bhakti is defined as loving attachment to stories etc.] because they do not infringe upon *ātmarati*'.[42] Against this he gives as his own definition: 'dedication of all acts to Him, greatest agitation when He is not remembered'.[43] When he gives a list of various types of bhakti, he has it culminate with 'cultivation of highest *viraha*'.[44]

In some cases we are able to trace in expressions of *viraha* bhakti substrata that might have reinforced it. Cāṇḍīdāsa's poetry about Kṛṣṇa's and Rādhā's separation seems to have derived its inspiration from the biographical fact that he, a brahmin, was in love with a low-caste girl, and that social opposition prevented him from fulfilling that love.[45] In Rājasthān (where Mīrābāī, one of the most famous medieval *viraha* bhakti poets, lived[46]) we seem to have almost something like a 'culture of separation', doubtlessly created and nourished by the desert, travelling through which made long separation inevitable. This is documented in Abdul Rahman's *Sandeśa-rāsaka*[47] and the famous epic *Ḍhola-Māru*,[48] in Rājas-

[41] NTM VI.

[42] *Ātma-raty-avirodhena iti Śāṇḍilyaḥ. sūtra* 18.

[43] *Nāradas tu: tad-arpitâkhilâcāratā tad-vismaraṇe parama-vyākulatā iti. sūtra* 19.

[44] *. . .parama-virahâsakti-rūpā, sūtra* 82. Note that also the *Śāṇḍilya-sūtras* (ed. Cowell, Calcutta, 1878) *sūtra* 44, accept *viraha*.

[45] See D. Bhattacharya, *Love-Songs of Chandidas*, London, 1967, Introduction, pp. 17–27.

[46] In the edition mentioned in note 6, Nos. 64–143 are *viraha* poems (pp. 119–142).

[47] See Appendix IV, with notes 19f.

[48] See Vaudeville, 1962b.

thānī folk-literature and parlance,[49] and in the Rājasthānī recension of Kabīr's poetry which constitutes almost exclusively the manuscript tradition for the *viraha* poems attributed to this mystic.[50]

6.3 A brief glance at the Christian tradition

I do not propose to enter now into a comparative study; all that it is possible to do at this final stage of our study is to try and further illuminate the phenomenon under discussion by resorting to a new point of observation. Theoretically, the character of emotional Kṛṣṇa bhakti could be compared for instance to the mystical tradition of the Rhineland or to the ecstasy cultivated in some Christian sectarian movements, but—and I am putting this merely as a question—would we not find that the phenomenon which I have tried to sketch in the previous pages has remained marginal to the Christian tradition as a whole?

Kṛṣṇa the lover of the *gopīs*, Māyōn the god of separation, as primal factors of religious awareness firmly embedded in a mythical and cultural tradition which could functionally be approximated to 'revelation' in Christianity, do not have their counterpart in the scriptural foundation of Christianity. Such a statement requires one obvious modification: there does exist the *Canticle*. But the fundamental problem of this beautiful work (quite apart from the fact that scholars have not succeeded in explaining its original *Sitz im Leben*) is that the Christ of the New Testament cannot possibly be envisaged, according to common Christian sentiment, as acting out the content of the *Canticle* literally (as Kṛṣṇa did with the *gopīs*). Thus the only alternative was allegory: Christ loving his Church, or the soul in love with God. One example illustrating the nature of this allegorical interpretation may suffice. In the *Cántico espiritual* of St John of the Cross we read:

> Where did you hide, my lover,
> leaving me in agony?
> You wounded me, and then fled like a deer.

[49] On popular genres see Vaudeville, 1962b, pp. 40–52. Popular *viraha* songs in Mārvāṛī, with Hindī translation, have been collected by Vijayadān Dethā, under the title *Mʻaravaṇa mʻāndī ō*, Jodhpur (Rājasthān saṅgīt nāṭak academy), no date. On p. 80 are listed words for 'husband/lover', many of which are versions of the epic *Māru*, the husband who comes only for short visits.

[50] See Vaudeville, 1974, pp. 160–71; poems nos. 1, 15, 17-55 on *viraha* are found exclusively in the Rājasthānī recension.

I ran outside after you, crying out,
and you had gone.[51]

This is clearly a remarkable recreation of the *Canticle*'s poetry by the Spanish mystic; however, we are not allowed to savour its poetic beauty and perhaps sense the transcendental allusions. Already the opening lines of St John's own commentary specify very precisely a prosaic and easily paraphrasable meaning:

In this first stanza, the soul which is in love with the Word, Son of God, its husband, desires to unite with Him through clear and essential vision, and declares its pangs of love by complaining of His absence. (It desires to unite) particularly since it still has to endure the absence of the lover when it had been hurt by His love, on account of which it had abandoned all things and its own self. . .[52]

The poetic words are not left to themselves to constitute an autonomous, meaningful, and evocative whole (which would involve *inter alia* human *eros*), and are deprived of their literal function through the allegorical sense forced upon them. (Someone told me that his poems got St John into the Inquisition's prison, while his commentaries got him out again—thus my criticism would concern the spirit of the time, and not the timidity of the poet.)

We may look at a little-known work by the Catalan mystic and theologian Ramón Llull, *The Book of the Friend and the Lover*. In this collection of aphorisms, inspired equally by the *Canticum* and the mysticism of the Muslim Ṣūfīs, we read:

A dispute arose between the eyes and the memory of the friend, for the eyes said that it is better to see the Lover than to remember Him, while memory claimed that through remembrance the flow of tears presses into the eyes and sets the heart aflame with love.[53]

[51] *¿Adónde te escondiste'/amado, y me dejaste con gemido?/Como el ciervo huiste,/habiendome herido;/salí tras ti, clamando, y eras ido.*/Stanza 1, quoted from: *San Juan de la Cruz, Poesías completas y comentarios en prosa a los poemas mayores*, ed. D. Alonso/E. Galvarriato, Madrid, 1959, p. 31.

[52] *En esta primera canción, el alma enamorada del Verbo Hijo de Dios su Esposo, deseando unirse con él por clara y esencial visión, propone sus ansias de amor, querellándose a él de la ausencia, mayormente que estando ella herida de su amor, por el cual ha salido de todas las cosas y de sí misma. Ibid.*, p. 103.

[53] No. 17: *Qüestió fo enfre los ulls e la memòria de l'amic, car los ulls deïen que mellor cosa és veer l'amat que membrar-lo, e la memòria dix que per lo remembrament puja l'aigua als ulls e el cor s'enflama d'amor*. Quoted from *Llibre d'Amic e Amat*, *Els Nostres Classics* Nr. 14, Barcelona, 1927.

In an earlier aphorism we read:

> The Lover tested His friend as to whether he loved perfectly, and He asked him what was the difference between the presence and the absence of the Lover. The friend replied: 'That of ignorance and forgetting, and of knowledge and remembrance.'[54]

Thus memory wins, because it means knowledge, causes love, and fills the eyes with tears. In a way, this corresponds to the impact, illustrated most clearly in the ViP passage, of the normative Indian ideology on the *gopī* myth: to 'remember' in *yoga* Kṛṣṇa is higher bhakti than to enjoy his physical presence. But as we have seen, for the Āḻvārs (and even for the *gopīs* in the BhP), bhakti acquires its particular flavour because the human personality remains aware of the senses and accepts them as positive.

But I have tried to show for Nammāḻvār that 'separation' is in fact seen as a particular mode of experiencing Kṛṣṇa's presence. S. Juan de la Cruz appears to offer a very close parallel for this. He says (later on in his commentary on stanza 1):

> Where did you hide? This is like saying: Word, my husband, show me the place where you are hiding. Thereby [the soul] requests Him for the manifestation of His divine essence . . . divine essence which is remote from, and hidden for all mortal eyes and all comprehension. . . . For in His reality, [God] is still hidden from the soul. . . Neither is the most intimate communication and sensuous presence a greater testimony of His presence, nor is the absence of all this in the soul, and its desolation (*sequedad*, lit. 'dryness') less of a testimony of His presence. . .[55]

This could be paraphrased: *qua* transcendental Being, God can be experienced by the soul only by transcending the dialectic of sensuous bliss and desolation or 'dryness', and this would seem to agree with Nammāḻvār's theology. But S. Juan continues:

[54] No. 6: *Tempà l'amat son amic si amava perfetament; e demanà-li de què era la diferència qui és enfre presència e absència d'amat. Respòs l'amic: De innorància e oblidament, coneixença e remembrament.*

[55] *Y es como si dijera: Verbo, Esposo mío, muéstrame el lugar do estás escondido. En lo cual le pide la manifestación de su divina esencia . . . esencia divina, la cual es ajena y escondida de todo ojo mortal, y de todo entendimiento . . . porque todavía en la verdad le está al alma escondido. . . Porque ni la alta comunicación y presencia sensible es más testimonio de su presencia, ni la sequedad y carencia de todo eso en el alma es menos testimonio de su presencia en ella.* Op.cit., pp. 104f.

. . . in order to know how to find the husband, so far as it is possible in this life to do so, one must realize that the Word . . . essentially abides hidden in the (most) intimate centre of the soul. Therefore it is fitting for the soul . . . to run outside and hide itself from all created things, . . . and enter into itself in greatest seclusion-and-concentration (*recogimiento*), . . . regarding everything that there is in the world as if it did not exist.[56]

A comparable withdrawal from all objects of the senses has been noticed as typical of normative Indian ideology; the BhP does not hesitate also to impose a monistic and illusionistic ontology 'on everything that there is in the world': the 'as if it did not exist' appears in the BhP as 'nothing except Kṛṣṇa exists'.

However, another Spanish (we had better say Basque, for that attribute indicates his character as no other could do) mystic, S. Íñigo de Loyola (better known as Ignatius) exemplifies an altogether different type of mysticism. His spirituality is summarized in the key-concept 'to look for God in all things'. In a passage entitled 'Contemplation in order to obtain love'[57] from his famous *Exercicios spirituales*[58] he prays: '. . .that I may love and serve in everything his divine majesty'[59] and contemplates 'how God works and acts for my sake in all created things on the face of the earth'.[60] In a letter of 1551 he writes to a student in Coimbra: 'You should practise looking for the presence of our Lord in all things, e.g. . . . in walking, seeing, tasting, hearing, thinking. . .'[61] In this mode of experiencing the divine presence in the sense objects we can immedi-

[56] *Y es de notar, para saber hallar este esposo (cual en esta vida se puede), que el Verbo . . . está esencialmente en el íntimo centro del alma escondido. Por tanto, el alma . . . conviénele salir y esconderse de todas las cosas criadas, . . . y entrarse en sumo recogimiento dentro de sí misma, . . . estimando todo lo que hay en el mundo como si no fuese.* Op. cit., p. 105.

[57] *Contemplación para alcançar amor.* See next note.

[58] I quote the *Autographum*, retaining all oddities of spelling: *Monumenta Ignatiana*, Series II (= *Monumenta Historica Societatis Jesu, a patribus eiusdem Societatis edita*), *Exercitia spiritualia Sancti Ignatii de Loyola et eorum Directoria*, Matriti, 1919.

[59] *Para que yo . . . pueda en todo amar y seruir a su diuina maiestad.* Op. cit., p. 428, col. *a*.

[60] Ibid., p. 432a: *cómo Dios trabaja y labora por mý en todas cosas criadas sobre la haz de la tierra.* St Ignatius adds here in Latin a curious phrase, showing how much 'action' preoccupied his mind: *id est habet se ad modum laborantis* 'that means he behaves like one who is working'.

[61] *Monumenta Ignatiana*, Series I: *Epistolae . . . ,volumen* 3, p. 510 (quoted from Stierli, see next note).

ately recognize the typical features of Āḻvār mysticism. But a major difference arises, when we consider the conclusions drawn from these sense impressions. While Kṛṣṇa bhakti evolves as an aesthetic-erotic-ecstatic mysticism of separation, Ignatius (after all the founder of the Jesuit order) develops a mysticism of action. To find God in all things means, when seen in the context of all his writings, to find in everything his will and actions ('how God works') which demand loving service in co-operation with Him.[62]

These three Spanish mystics suggest a spectrum which might be considered characteristic, or at least significantly typical, of the Christian tradition as a whole: on the one side the withdrawal from the world of created things, linked with the sublimation of the erotic and aesthetic (= *contemplatio*), and on the other a conscious savouring of sensuous, empirical reality, coupled with the desire to work and transform this reality (= *actio*). A corrective, and yet at the same time a corroboration for the picture sketched here is provided by a modern Catholic theologian, Hans Urs von Balthasar. His interpretation comes remarkably close to what has emerged in the previous pages as typical Kṛṣṇa eroticism. He attributes to the *Canticle* an 'eindeutig erotischen Gehalt' and goes on to say:

> By no means must the literal sense of this song be given such a religious interpretation, that it is from the start regarded as a 'mystery play', while the simple meaning of the words is ignored. For the intention is not to make, above all, individual factual statements and observations, which could be interpreted in an allegorical manner, but to create a tense erotic mood in which alone the words acquire their expressive power.[63]

Such a statement is a corrective, for it shows that Christian theology *can* maintain a dialectical tension between the world of the senses *(eros)* and contemplation, without immediately plunging into

[62] J. Stierli, 'Das ignatianische Gebet "Gott suchen in allen Dingen"', in *Ignatius von Loyola—Seine geistliche Gestalt und sein Vermächtnis*, ed. F. Wulf, Würzburg, no date, offprint, pp. 14, 20, 23, 25, 27f.

[63] 'Offenbarung und Schönheit', in *Verbum Caro*, Einsiedeln, 1960, p. 130: *'Keinesfalls ist der Literalsinn dieses Liedes so zu sakralisieren, daß man ihn von vornherein als "Mysterienspiel" nimmt, mit Überspringen der schlichten Aussage der Worte. Es geht ja nicht vor allem um einzelne sachliche Aussagen und Feststellungen, die man allegorisch interpretieren könnte, sondern um die Erzeugung einer hochgespannten erotischen Atmosphäre, in der allein die Worte . . . ihre Aussagekraft gewinnen.'*

action, including ethics. But it corroborates the limitations of the spectrum sketched above in that it is *theology*, and not (according to my knowledge) *a way of life* or a whole cultural tradition (as it certainly is in Kṛṣṇaism).

But we must remember that this excursion into a few and selective facets of the Christian tradition was meant to serve solely as illumination of the Indian phenomenon. Yet if there is any general truth in the picture derived from these Christian authors, it would indicate a direction from which the Indian phenomenon might be misjudged. I am not speaking here about the now fashionable syncretistic approach according to which everything is the same as everything else, an approach which time and again equates Indian mysticism, the *Canticle*, the Spanish mystics etc. (the reader may cast a glance into the work of authors like Radhakrishnan,[64] Mascaró,[65] or Bhattacharya[66]). P. Hacker provides us with such an initial, spontaneous reaction to Kṛṣṇa emotionalism, based on unconscious ideological presuppositions typical of the Christian tradition. What makes the following statement by him so interesting for us is the fact that Hacker himself confesses: '. . . I do not yet possess sufficient insight into the literature of the theistic Vedânta'[67]—in other words, the following represents a spontaneous initial assessment. He writes that:

> 'this love of God appears in the literature sometimes in forms in which the structure of the person is considerably disturbed. The deity becomes then the cause of the psychological production of exquisite emotional pleasures. The love of God has therefore by no means universally contributed to a deepening of the understanding of the person, particularly since its connection with ethics got lost.[68]

[64] For example, *The Principal Upaniṣads* (= Muirhead Library of Philosophy) London, 2nd ed., 1968. St John of the Cross is used three times to illustrate the oneness of East and West: pp. 106 note 4; 303; 586.

[65] *The Dhammapada*, Harmondsworth, 1973. On pp. 13f 'night' in BhG II, 69 is equated with St John's *noche*, on p. 16 St Teresa is used to illustrate *yoga*, Mahāyāna *śūnyatā* corresponds to the same St John's *nada* on p. 26, etc.

[66] *The Mirror of the Sky*, London, 1969, p. 34.

[67] 'Die Idee der Person im Denken von Vedānta-Philosophen' in *Hinduism* (= *Studia Missionalia, edita a Facultate Missiologica in Pont. Universitate Gregoriana*, no. XIII), Rome, 1963, p. 51: '. . .*„ich habe noch nicht genügend Einblick in die . . . Literatur des theistischen Vedānta'*.

[68] Ibid. pp. 51f: *'diese Gottesliebe in der Literatur zuweilen in Formen erscheint, in denen gerade das Personale erheblich gestört ist. Die Gottheit wird dann zu einem*

Hacker appears to refer back to his analysis of the ViP Prahlāda legend, where, he says:

> the relationship between God and man has been recognized as the precondition for a personal relationship between people, viz. that of compassion. Because I love Viṣṇu, and Viṣṇu is in all beings, I must have sympathy with them, even bhakti: that is the theological ethic of Prahlāda.[69]

I think it is not difficult to sense in these remarks a typically Christian attitude: ethics means 'love thy neighbour', means to 'find in all things' God's will and order to act—an attitude which cannot hide its scorn for 'exquisite emotional pleasures'. But I wonder whether it is not possible to derive from the analysis of Kṛṣṇa emotionalism, particularly as realized by the Āḻvārs, a kind of ethics—certainly very strange and exotic when measured against Christian ethics—which is implied in the *shared* experience of Kṛṣṇa's beauty and in the *communal* agony of separation. After all, the emotions we have encountered are far from 'exquisite', and after all the forms of 'producing' and intensifying these emotions (poetry, song, dance, worship, music. . .) presuppose an 'interhuman personal relation' between the *bhaktas*.

6.4 Ecstasy and surrender to the cosmos

The ecstatic outbursts which we have encountered in the previous pages, and the 'turning into a woman' are probably the points which might confuse, puzzle, or prejudice us most. Thus it may be desirable to investigate some possible directions of an objective evaluation which avoid the misunderstandings typical of normative ideologies (whether Christian or Indian). Examples of the latter have been met with frequently: 'crazy',[70] 'madness', 'possession',[71]

Anlaß der psychologischen Erzeugung exquisiter Gefühlsgenüsse. (. . .) Die Gottesliebe hat also im Hinduismus keineswegs durchweg zu einer Vertiefung des Personverständnisses beigetragen, insbesondere weil ihre Verbindung mit der Ethik verloren ging.'

69 Ibid. p. 51: *'Gott-Mensch-Beziehung als die Voraussetzung einer mitmenschlich-personalen Relation, nämlich der des Mitleids, erkannt ist. Weil ich Viṣṇu liebe, und Viṣṇu in allen Wesen ist, muß ich zu diesen Mitleid, ja Bhakti haben: das ist die theologische Ethik Prahlādas.'*

70 *pēyar* PāḷTM III, 8.

71 *maiyal, mayal, ēriya pittu* TVM IV, 4.

'mad',[72] 'hysterical',[73] 'disturbance of the personality'.[74] Individually, they may appear in ironic, metaphorical, or vague contexts, but *in toto* they suggest a definite attitude.

I begin with a case of paranoia which is of particular interest to us because it involved a 'turning into a woman'. I follow E. Canetti's exposition:

> The idea of his transformation into a woman occupied him [Daniel Paul Schreber] continually during the years of his illness [paranoia]. He felt female nerves being sent into his body as rays and gradually gaining the upper hand.
>
> At the beginning of his illness he tried to take his own life in many different ways in order to escape so terrible a degradation. . . But his despair about his proposed transformation into a woman did not last indefinitely. A conviction gradually grew up in him that this would be the best way of guaranteeing the continued existence of mankind. . . . he thought all human beings had perished in some terrible catastrophe and he was the only one left alive. If he were a woman he would be able to bring forth a new generation. The only possible father for his children was God, so he must win his love. To be united with God was a high honour; to change more and more into a woman for his sake, to dress up so as to attract him and to lure him with feminine wiles no longer seemed a disgrace and degradation to this bearded man . . . more and more strongly attracted by the beautiful woman Schreber, the Almighty would come to depend on him. By such means. . . Schreber succeeded in 'attaching God to his person' . . . Time and again God withdrew from Schreber, and he doubtless wanted to free himself completely. But Schreber's attraction had grown too strong.[75]

Canetti draws particular attention to the power-mania underlying Schreber's paranoid transformation:

> It was in order to disarm God that he wanted to transform himself into a woman. . . To win him over to his side and to make sure of him, he lured him to approach and then used every means to keep him there.[76]

Superficially this case might resemble the feature of Kṛṣṇa emotionalism which I have styled 'turning into a woman'. But funda-

[72] *bātul* > mod. Bengali *bāül*, *Caitanyacaritâmṛta Madhya* VIII, 295.
[73] Gonda, 1948, p. 640.
[74] Hacker, see notes 67f.
[75] *Crowds and Power*, Harmondsworth, 1973, pp. 521f (first published as *Masse und Macht*, Hamburg, 1960).
[76] Ibid., p. 523.

mental differences are obvious. Indeed, both Schreber and the *bhaktas* are faced with a God envisaged as male; but Schreber turns into a woman to lure the god to approach, be caught in the trap of his femaleness, and be dominated, so that Schreber can bring forth a new generation, a new creation. The *bhaktas*, on the other hand, regarding the female *gopīs* as the ideal lovers of Kṛṣṇa, try to accord themselves *to the given rhythm* of the created order by loving Him as perfectly as possible, viz. by imitating the *gopīs*. Kṛṣṇa emotionalism is not a devious allurement to replace the given 'generation' or human condition, just as it does not aim at making use of the deity for 'exquisite emotional pleasures' and usurp the power to set a new cosmos into being, but it is a form of finding meaning and happiness in the existing order.

J. P. Sartre has written an interesting *Sketch for a Theory of the Emotions*, which deserves to be discussed in the present context. The premises of such a theory can be derived from the following two statements: 'The emotion is a specific manner of apprehending the world'.[77] 'It is a transformation of the world'.[78] This is a strange conception when judged according to the more common Occidental understanding of our relationship to the world which centres on knowing and dominating the world, in a sense, on *actio* and *contemplatio*. It is so unusual that Sartre has to resort to cases of mental illness and to notions like 'magic' to exemplify his premises.

> When the paths before us become too difficult, . . . we can no longer put up with such an exacting and difficult world. . . So then we try to change the world; that is, to live as though the relations between things and their potentialities were not governed by deterministic processes but by magic. But . . . this is no playful matter: we are cornered, and we fling ourselves into this new attitude with all the force at our command. Note also that our effort is not conscious of what it is . . . since the seizure of one object is impossible, or sets up an unbearable tension, the consciousness seizes or tries to seize it otherwise; that is, tries to transform itself in order to transform the object.[79]
>
> . . . during emotion, it is the body which, directed by the consciousness, changes its relationship with the world so that the world should change its qualities. If emotion is play-acting, the play is one we believe in.[80]

[77] *Sketch for a Theory of the Emotions*, London, 1971, p. 57 (first published as: *Esquisse d'une théorie des émotions*, Paris (before 1962).

[78] Ibid., p. 63.

[79] Ibid.

[80] Ibid., p. 65.

An everyday illustration is 'sour grapes': since the frustration of not reaching them has to be eased, 'I confer the required quality upon the grapes magically',[81] for naturally, I cannot change the grapes chemically. Sartre generalizes:

> . . . they [the types of emotions] are all reducible to the constitution of a magic world, the making use of our bodies as instruments of incantation.[82]

Analysing horror, Sartre shows that in the 'magic world' of this emotion a transcendental dimension is implied:

> . . . the mere affirmation of horribleness as a substantial quality of the object is already, by itself, a passage to the infinite. The horrible is now in the thing, at the heart of it, is its emotive texture, is constitutive of it. Thus, during emotion, an overwhelming and definitive quality of the thing makes its appearance. And that is what transcends and maintains our emotion. Horribleness is not only the present state of the thing. . .[but is ultimately] a revelation about the meaning of the world . . . the emotion is lifted out of itself and transcends itself; it is no ordinary episode of our daily life, but an intuition of the absolute.[83]

Postponing the metaphysical implications of this analysis, we may briefly look at his analysis of joy:

> . . . joy has been called up by an apparition of the object of . . desires. Joy is magical behaviour which tries, by incantation, to realize the possession of the desired object as an instantaneous totality.
>
> To dance, or to sing for joy—these represent the behaviour of symbolic approximation, of incantation. By their means the object—which in reality one may not be able to possess except by prudent . . . behaviour—is possessed at once, symbolically. . . . he is possessing the object by magic; the dance mimes his possession of it.[84]

However surprised we may be to read in a philosopher like Sartre about an 'intuition of the absolute', he elaborates on this:

> . . . it is constitutive of emotion that it attributes to the object something that infinitely transcends it. Indeed, there is a world of emotion. . . .We have to speak of a world of emotion as one speaks of a world of dreams or of worlds of madness.[85]

[81] Ibid., pp. 65f.
[82] Ibid., p. 73.
[83] Ibid., pp. 82f.
[84] Ibid., pp. 71, 72, 72f.
[85] Ibid., p. 81.

We are approaching here the crux of the whole of Sartre's theory of the emotions. Obviously, an existentialist philòsopher cannot grant ontological validity to such a 'world of emotion' (nor to the 'magical behaviour' nor to the 'intuition of the absolute'). In fact, to abandon, during emotion, the 'prudent behaviour' of remaining detached and unmoved either by the 'apparition of the object one desires' or 'the horribleness as a present state of a thing', and to regard these emotional experiences as 'a revelation about the meaning of the world' has, for Sartre, its origin in 'a spontaneous debasement lived by the consciousness in face of the world'.[86] Such debasement, which gives rise to the magical behaviour of the emotions, is founded upon 'belief'.[87]

We have reached here a juncture at which the 'phenomenological'[88] analysis turns into a value judgement. However, it is not my object to discuss Sartre's philosophy here, though I think we have gained valuable insights into the significance of Kṛṣṇa emotionalism through Sartre's *Sketch*. Guided by a particular structure of beliefs, the *bhakta* 'apprehends' and 'transforms the world' through his emotions. Even his breaking down[89] in the agony of separation can thus be seen as a transformation of the world—and this not just through magic, but through concrete artistic creations. But the phrase 'transforming the world' evokes a number of associations ('scientific control', 'exploitation of the natural resources', 'interfering with the environment', etc.) which are better avoided here, since they are alien to Kṛṣṇa emotionalism. Thus we could say: the *bhakta's* emotions are a particular manner of coming to terms with the world, of 'putting up with the world',[90] which in terms of his own system means: of overcoming the impossible situation of remaining a full and yet contingent human being in face of the absolute.

In the words of early Buddhism, love, pleasure, passion, and desire cause grief;[91] not to see what one loves is the nature of

[86] Ibid., p. 79.

[87] Ibid., pp. 75, 77.

[88] Sartre styles his approach 'phenomenological psychology', p. 31; see pp. 14–31 on a psychology based on the phenomenology of Husserl.

[89] See Sartre, pp. 36ff, 69ff. on 'break-down'.

[90] Ibid., p. 63.

[91] *Dhammapada* Nos. 213–6: *prema*, *rati*, *kāma*, and *tṛṣṇā* give rise to *śoka*.

suffering,[92] and in the awareness of the Buddha this *duḥkham* defines the whole of phenomenal existence. To avoid *duḥkham* which is constitutive of grief, means to avoid the emotions of love, pleasure, passion, desire; means 'to enter into oneself in greatest seclusion-and-concentration', 'to close the eyes and remember Him', and 'to regard everything as if it did not exist'. But the Āḻvārs chose a different way: by opening up all the doors of their senses and by plunging without restraint into the world of emotions, they certainly did not gain the mental tranquillity and peace of a *yogī*, but encountered overwhelming grief. Yet they succeeded in coming to terms with the confines of empirical reality (desire and grief) by enjoying all its splendour as the symbol—the painful presence—of Him who transcends these confines. Empirically speaking, any peak aesthetic, erotic, ecstatic experience implies pain; and by paraphrasing the metaphysical explanation which the Āḻvārs provide we can say: this pain (styled 'separation') which poetically and mythically is literally conceived of as the physical separation of lovers, results from the finite attempting to apprehend, comprehend, contain the infinite. Separation is the experience of the *bhakta* of himself being open for something that transcends him. The *bhakta* 'turns into a *gopī*' not in order to lure his god, to overcome and dominate him, so as to create a new generation; he does not derive a plan of action or an ethical system from the sensuous experience of Kṛṣṇa's (symbolic) presence in the world; and his breaking down, in spite of its semblance to 'debasement', activates vast resources of creativity.

This is, I think, also the result arrived at by I. M. Lewis in his factual, value-neutral, and thus far more positive assessment of the potentials of emotions (and beliefs connected with them) which is found in his social-anthropological study of 'Ecstatic Religion'.[93] This work is full of parallels to features which we have encountered in the previous pages: ecstasy as trance and mental dissociation,[94] soul-loss and possession,[95] and erotic symbolism.[96] However, Lewis' aim is not to analyse the whole range of ecstasy and its

[92] Ibid., No. 210: *piyānam adassanaṃ dukkham.*
[93] See Lewis, 1971.
[94] Ibid., p. 38; compare for example TVM IV, 4.
[95] Lewis, 1971, p. 46; compare PTAnt 49; TVM IV, 2; CTMaṭ.
[96] Lewis, 1971, pp. 57–9.

various expressions; he is primarily interested in 'how the production of religious ecstasy might relate to social circumstances of those who produce it.'[97] On this particular point our sources offer little information, since it is precisely the social environment of the Āḻvārs and the *Bhāgavata-Purāṇa* which has remained tantalizingly obscure. All we might possibly say is that at the earliest stage in our sources, viz. in classical *caṅkam* society, possession and ecstasy occur as unquestioned tribal phenomena[98]; that in Nammāḻvār and Parakālaṉ ecstatic Kṛṣṇa bhakti is differentiated as superior and sublimated form from those ancient 'pagan' tribal cults;[99] and that the Śrīvaiṣṇava establishment indeed relegated ecstasy to the background.[100] But another point has evolved with all desirable clarity: that due to the cultural fusion of Northern and Southern features, ecstatic Kṛṣṇa religion could *not* be interpreted simply as 'possession' by Kṛṣṇa, since quite clearly the notion of Kṛṣṇa as the Absolute made this impossible. The painful elements of ecstasy as experienced by the Āḻvārs and the emotive association of Kṛṣṇa with the *mullai* landscape combined with the pressures of the notion of an absolute Kṛṣṇa and produced an interpretation of ecstasy as 'separation'. Unlike any of the examples referred to by Lewis,[101] the type of ecstatic religion we have been studying is interpreted not as the union of man and the divine, but as an ultimate realization of their separateness. However, in terms of Lewis's invaluable motto 'ecstasy is as ecstasy does',[102] also ecstatic Kṛṣṇa devotion 'does' what other forms of ecstasy do: to rise 'to the challenge of the powers which rule [man's] life',[103] to reassert 'his mastery of the universe',[104] to gain 'independence and hope',[105] and to 'perpetuate (. . .) [the] original accord between God and man'.[106] But this also implies that the ecstatic behaviour through

[97] Ibid., p. 21.

[98] See sections 3.211 and 3.214 above.

[99] See in particular TVM IV, 6 with its implied criticism of the ancient practices ('without dignity', 'waste', 'wicked'); compare CTMaṭ.

[100] See pp. 480 above, and compare 4.37 and 5.1; Lewis, 1971, pp. 33, 131–3.

[101] Ibid., p. 204: 'What is proclaimed is not merely that God is *with* us, but that He is *in* us.'

[102] Modified from p. 36: 'possession is as possession does'.

[103] Ibid., p. 188.

[104] Ibid., p. 190.

[105] Ibid.

[106] Ibid., p. 205.

which the *bhakta* finds his fulfilment is brought about not directly by social pressures (e.g., subordinate position) or pressures from a highly threatening environment, but through religious beliefs coupled with more unconscious attitudes towards religion—what I have described as: stubbornly holding on to the basic validity of the *whole* person vis-à-vis an absolute god with transcendental and cosmic characteristics. Ecstasy of separation is precisely the means by which such a dilemma can be solved emotionally: 'by identifying ecstatically with (. . .) recurrent hazards which are impossible to withstand otherwise [=in our case, separation].'[107] An extraordinary feature reveals itself here: these 'hazards' are in fact brought about, and then cultivated, by the religious exercises of *viraha-bhakti* themselves. Thus ecstasy as a constituent of emotional bhakti can be regarded as the psychological solution to the emotional and ideological tensions which are produced by emotional bhakti itself. But another feature distinguishes our material very pronouncedly from the examples analysed by Lewis: the cultivation of *viraha-bhakti* has been not only a *cult*, but in fact the foundation or stimulus for a major component of Indian *culture* over a period of more than a millennium. It is here that it has revealed not only its subjective side as means of resolving emotional dilemmas, but also its objective force as socially and culturally operative factor.

The significance of the 'song of an unknown bird' which Mrs Moore could but sense, is not that Kṛṣṇa refuses to come in every song, but that Godbole and the servants can enjoy and suffer something of Kṛṣṇa's 'not coming' in the beauty of the song. From Sartre's premises, this joy and suffering constitute a 'debasement'; from the point of view of criticism of ideology, the underlying Kṛṣṇa theology will be just a fairy tale;[108] and the BhP tells us that *sub specie aeternitatis* the whole world, the *gopīs*, the *bhaktas*, their senses and emotions are but the mirror-image of Kṛṣṇa. But Sartre has to acknowledge that on the empirical plane emotions

[107] Ibid., pp. 204f.

[108] See for example E. Topitsch, *Vom Ursprung und Ende der Metaphysik*, München, 1972 (1st ed. Vienna, 1958). The author tries to show that value-judgements and norms of behaviour which are derived from 'cosmic principles', 'natural law', 'divine ordinance', etc., are simply the result of value-judgements and norms initially projected upon the cosmos (in the form of myth, theology, metaphysics, ideologies, etc.). He concludes from this situation that only a sober and 'value-irrational' (e.g., p. 396) scientific attitude towards the world, based upon the 'simple human

imply a drive to transcend themselves; the edifice of emotional Kṛṣṇa bhakti remains a challenge, for is this drive *necessarily* a debasement? It remains a challenge for the critic of ideology too: the value-neutral, sober, and 'scientific' view of the world which he proposes leaves the possible significance of the emotions and of emotionalism in our sense (aesthetics, eros, ecstasy) as fundamental human needs and as drives to transcend themselves, as ways of 'coming to terms with the world' in a manner which is more meaningful, and which makes use of more of man's potentials, than mere 'science', unexplored.

APPENDICES

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needs and demands of life' (p. 396), is intellectually honest. He realizes that such an attitude has emotive consequences: '*Die Menschen gewöhnen sich an die "Entzauberung der Welt", bis sie den ganzen Vorgang nicht mehr als solche empfinden: die Anpassung des Gefühlslebens an die Erkenntnis ist vollzogen. Auf dies Weise erledigen sich weltanschauliche Probleme von selbst, nicht indem sie eine Antwort finden, sondern indem sie gegenstandslos werden.*' (p. 397)

APPENDICES

APPENDICES

APPENDIX I

Harivaṃśa 63, 15-35

Kṛṣṇas tu yauvanaṃ dṛṣṭvā niśi candramaso navam /*
śāradīnāṃ niśānāṃ ca manaś cakre ratiṃ prati // 15 //*
sa karīṣâṅga-rāgāsu vraja-rathyāsu vīryavān /
vṛṣāṇāṃ jāta-rāgāṇāṃ yuddhāni samayojayat // 16 //*
go-pālāṃś ca balôdagrān yodhayāmāsa vīryavān /
vane sa vīro *gāś câiva* jagrāha grāhavad vibhuḥ // 17 // [*var.*: gopīś ca]
yuvatīr gopa-kanyāś ca rātrau saṃkālya kāla-vit /*
kaiśorakaṃ mānayānaḥ saha tābhir mumoda ha // 18 //
tās tasya vadanaṃ kāntaṃ kāntā gopa-striyo niśi /
pibanti nayanâkṣepair gāṃ gataṃ śaśinaṃ yathā // 19 //
haritālârdra-pītena kauśeyena ca bhāsvatā /*
bhadra-vastreṇa vasitaḥ Kṛṣṇaḥ kānta-taro 'bhavat // 20 //
sa baddhâṅgada-nir*vyū*haś citrayā vana-mālayā / [*var.*: ryū]
śobhamāno hi Govindaḥ śobhayāmāsa taṃ vrajam // 21 //
namo Dāmôdarāyêti gopa-kanyās tadâbruvan /*
vicitraṃ caritaṃ ghoṣe dṛṣṭvā tat tasya bhāsvataḥ // 22 //

15a Doubtless, *yauvanam* has to be connected with 'moon'; the *gen.* °*maso* is found in the majority of Mss; Nīlakaṇṭha (p. 198) paraphrases it as *kāntimattva*, 'delightfulness'. Yet *Pāṇini* IV, 2, 38 'a number of young women' (for *yauvatam*) seems to have been in the minds of some Mss (which read °*masam* so that 'moon' is a separate object) and of the later *puraṇic* authors (Br/ViP) who specify 'gopībhir... ratim...'

15b The *ca* does not construe in the *crit. ed;* almost half the Mss have *śāradīṃ ca niśāṃ ramyām*, as second object with *dṛṣṭvā*. But note verse 35 where *mud* is qualified by *śāradīṣu niśāsu*.

16b *sam-yuj* MW 'to perform (Hv, BhP)'; caus. 'to bring together, unite'.

18a I have retained from earlier editions the *acc.* °*tīr crit. ed.* instead of °*tyas* (*nom.*), since the verb *saṃkālayati* has a transitive meaning: 'to drive cattle together'.

20a I prefer to take *haritāla* and *ārdra* as a *dvandva*; Nīlakaṇṭha (p. 198) says that both words together mean 'mud'.

22a The text as found in the *crit. ed.* and as translated above may be a later variant which was influenced by religious formulae like 'namo Nārāyaṇāya', etc., similar to *734 which the Southern Recension inserts after verse 22: 'namas te Kṛṣṇa gopêti prasīda prabhavêti ca' and even more pronounced in a variant (for *gopa* in the above interpolation) of T_1, M_4: *devêti*. The alternative *nāma Dāmôdarêty evam* of the Northern Recension (*nāmnā* variant in 6 Mss) 'they called him "Dāmôdara" by name' seems equally unsatisfactory, because the name was given to Kṛṣṇa alréady on an earlier occasion (Hv 51, 36). But the

tās taṃ payodharôttānair urobhiḥ samapīḍayan /
bhrāmitâkṣaiś ca vadanair nirīkṣante varâṅganāḥ // 23 //
tā vāryamānāḥ *pitṛ*bhir bhrātṛbhir mātṛbhis tathā / [*var*: pati]
Kṛṣṇaṃ gopâṅganā rātrau mṛgayanti rati-priyāḥ // 24 //
tās tu paṅktī-kṛtāḥ sarvā ramayanti manoramam /
gāyantyaḥ Kṛṣṇa-caritaṃ dvandvaśo gopa-kanyakāḥ // 25 //
Kṛṣṇa-līlânukāriṇyaḥ Kṛṣṇa-praṇihitêkṣaṇāḥ /
Kṛṣṇasya gati-gāminyas taruṇyas tā varâṅganāḥ // 26 //
vaneṣu tāl*ān* hastâgraiḥ kuṭṭayantyas tathâparāḥ /*
cerur vai caritaṃ tasya Kṛṣṇasya vraja-yoṣitaḥ // 27 //
tās tasya nṛtyaṃ gītaṃ ca vilāsa-smita-vīkṣitam /
muditāś cânukurvantyaḥ krīḍanti vraja-yoṣitah // 28 //
bhāva-niṣpanna-madhuraṃ gāyantyas tā varâṅganāḥ /
vrajaṃ gatāḥ sukhaṃ cerur Dāmôdara-parāyaṇāḥ // 29 //*
karīṣa-pāṃsu-digdhâṅgyas tāḥ Kṛṣṇam anuvavrire /
ramayantyo yathā nāgaṃ sapramodāḥ kareṇavaḥ // 30 //*
tam anyā bhāva-vikacair netraiḥ prahasitânanāḥ /
pibanty atṛptā vanitāḥ Kṛṣṇaṃ kṛṣṇa-mṛgêkṣaṇāḥ // 31 //
mukham asyâparā vīkṣya tṛṣitā gopa-kanyakāḥ /
raty-antara-gatā rātrau pibanti rati-lālasāḥ // 32 //*
hā hêti kurvatas tasya prahṛṣṭās tā varâṅganāḥ /*
jagṛhur niḥsṛtāṃ vāṇīṃ sāmnā Dāmôdarêritām // 33 //
tāsāṃ grathita-sīmantā rati-cintâkulī-kṛtāḥ /*
cāru visraṃsire keśāḥ kucâgre gopa-yoṣitām // 34 //
evaṃ sa Kṛṣṇo gopīnāṃ cakravālair alaṅkṛtaḥ /
śāradīṣu sa-candrāsu niśāsu mumude sukhī // 35 //

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verse itself may be a 'skeleton *śloka*' that belonged to a different context and was inserted here because it mentions the *gopīs*.

27a I read with two Northern and two Southern Mss *tālān* (acc.) as object to *kuṭṭ*. The remaining Mss have *tāla-:* 'with cymbals in their fingers'? *Kuṭṭ* could also mean: 'multiplying, increasing', in which case one would have to translate: 'increasing the tempo'.

29b I am doubtful about *vrajaṃ gatāḥ;* it could simply mean: 'when they went out to the cowpens'. If it is taken as a proper name, I would prefer to read: *Vraja-gatāḥ*, 'in V.' (compare *Bālacarita* Act III, verse (3) *Vṛndâraṇya-gate)*.

30b A great many Mss have *sampramattam* 'very excited in rut' which seems to occur only in Hv (and was therefore replaced by Vaidya?).

32b *raty-antara-gatā:* my translation of this rather obscure phrase is derived from *Mṛcchakaṭika* III, 12 *darśântara-gata* 'come within the range of sight'.

33a *hā hā* 'pain, surprise, satisfaction' but Nīlakaṇṭha (p. 199) *virahâturatvam āviṣkurvataḥ.*

34a Many Mss *śrāntâ* for *cintā.*

APPENDIX II

Kṛṣṇa's hallīsaka *in the* Bālacaritam

Act III, towards the end of the *praveśaka* :

Dāmaka (=Dā) **māduḷa!** ṣavvaṃ dāva ciṭṭhadu. ajja bhaṭṭi-Dāmôdaḷo imaṣṣiṃ *Vu*ndāvaṇe[1] gova-kaṇṇaāhi ṣaha haḷḷīṣaaṃ ṇāma[2] *p*akīḷiduṃ āacchadi.

vṛddha-gopālakaḥ (=vg) teṇa hi ṣavvehi gova-jaṇehi ṣaha bhaṭṭi-Dāmôdaḷaṣṣa haḷḷīṣaaṃ pĕkkhamha.

Dā **jaṃ mādulo āṇavedi.** (niṣkrāntau)

-praveśakaḥ-

vg (praviśya)

aṇudia-matte ṣuyye
paṇamaha ṣavvādaḷeṇa[3] ṣīṣeṇa /
ṇiccaṃ jaga-mādūṇaṃ
goṇāṇaṃ amida-puṇṇāṇa*ṃ*[4] // 1 // (āryā)

aho amhāṇaṃ **pakkaṇāṇaṃ** ṣamiddhi! āḍova-ṣajjāo paḍaha-*ḷū*[5]va-ve*ṣā*o[a] **vāhaḷiduṃ** gacchā-mo[6]*a*mhāaṃ gova-kaṇṇaāo. Ghoṣa-ṣundaḷi! Vaṇa-māḷe! Canda-ḷehe! Miakkhi! **āacchaha! āacchaha ṣigghaṃ!**

(tataḥ praviśanti sarvāḥ) **māduḷa! vandāmo.**

vg dāḷiā! eṣo bhaṭṭā Dāmôdaḷo gŏ-kkh*īḷa*[7]-paṇḍ-aḷeṇa[7] bhaṭṭiṇā Ṣaṅkaḷiṣaṇeṇa ṣaha govāḷaehi a pa*ḷi*vudo[8] guhā-*ṇikkhitto*[9] ṣiṃho via ido evva āacchadi.

My own emendations and notes:

(a) I would suggest the word-order *paḍaha-ṣajjāo ḷūva-veṣa-āḍovāo.*

Weller's notes and emendations (Weller, 1922, text, p. 94):

(1) the MSS (of Gaṇapati Śāstrī's edition) read *kundā-*.
(2) Weller thinks that something like *ṇacca-bandha* has been left out after *ṇāma*.
(3) The MSS are not clear concerning *ṇe/ḷe*; he changed *ṣavyā* to *ṣaḷā* (his *chāyā* still has *sarvā*), but this does not fit the metre, nor does it make much sense here.
(4) The *ṃ* is missing in the *MSS*.
(5) The *MSS* read *rūva* and *vesāo*.
(6) The *MSS* put a full-stop here.
(7) The *MSS* read *kkhīra* and *paṇḍareṇa*.
(8) The *MSS* read *pari*.
(9) Weller quotes Gaṇapati: 'The Prakrit ought to be changed to *ṇikkhanto'*, but this is unnecessary, although *nikṣipta-guho* would be preferable.

(tataḥ praviśati gopa-jana-parivṛto Dāmôdaraḥ Saṅkarṣaṇaś ca)
Dāmôdara (Do) (sa-vismayam) aho prakṛtyā ramaṇīyānāṃ gopa-kanyakānāṃ veṣa-grahaṇa-viśeṣaḥ!

etāḥ praphulla-kamalôtpala-vaktra-netrā
gopâṅganāḥ kanaka-campaka-puṣpa-gaurāḥ /
nānā-virāga-vasanā madhura-pralāpāḥ
krīḍanti vanya-kusumâkula-keśa-
hastāḥ // 2 // (vasantatilaka)

Saṅkarṣaṇa (=S) ete gopa-dārakāḥ samāgatāḥ:

raktair vesuka[b]-ḍiṇḍimaiḥ pramuditāḥ kecin nadantaḥ sthitāḥ
kecit paṅkaja-patra-netra-vadanāḥ krīḍanti nānāvidham /
ghoṣe jāgari*tā*[10] guru-pramuditā humbh-*āra*[11c]-śabdâkule
Vṛndāraṇya-gate sama-pramuditā gāyanti kecit sthitāḥ // 3 // (śārdūlavikrīḍita)

vg āma[d], bhaṭṭā. ṣavvā ṣaṇṇaddhā āadā.[e]
Dā jedu, bhaṭṭā.
S Dāmaka, sarve gopa-dārakāḥ samāgatāḥ?
Dā āma[d], bhaṭṭā. ṣavve ṣaṇṇaddhā āadā.
Do Ghoṣa-sundari! Vana-māle! Candra-rekhe! Mṛgâkṣi! ghoṣa-vāsasyânurūpo 'yaṃ hallīśaka-nṛtta-bandha upayujyatām.
Sarve **jaṃ bhaṭṭā āṇavedi.**
S Dāmaka! Megha-nāda! vādyantām aṭodyāni.

(b) The word *vesuka* is not found in MW. Is it for *pesuka* (MW: only in the *Śata-pathabrāhmaṇa*) 'spreading'? A better meaning could be derived from Tamil *pēcuka* 'roaring', 'making a loud noise'.
(c) The word is not found in MW. We can compare *hambhā* 'lowing' and *huṃkāra* 'animal's noise'.
(d) In MW only *ām* is found as particle of assent; compare also Tamil *ām* 'yes'.
(e) The sentence, isolated as it stands here, does not connect well with the context. Either it must be discarded as a repetition of the following, or—which seems preferable in my opinion—one has to insert after verse 3 a question by Kṛṣṇa *sarvā gopa-dārikā samāgatāḥ*? 'have all the cowherd girls come together?'

(10) The *MSS* are not clear on *mā/tā*.
(11) The syllable *ra* appears to be Gaṇapati's conjecture.

ubhau bhaṭṭā, tathā.
vg bhaṭṭā, tumhe haḷḷīṣaaṃ[12] pakīḷa*ha*[13]. ahaṃ ettha kiṃ ka*ḷe*mi[14]?
Do prêkṣako bhavān nanu.
vg bhaṭṭā, taha. (sarve nṛtyanti)
vg **hī, hī, ṣuṭṭhu gā*i*daṃ**,[15] ṣuṭṭhu vāidaṃ, **ṣuṭṭhu ṇaccidaṃ. jāva ahaṃ vi ṇaccemi.** paḷissanto khu ahaṃ.

(text: Weller, 1922, text, pp. 45-9; Devadhar, 1962 is little more than a reprint of Gaṇapati Śāstrī's text.)
Phrases printed in **bold** letters are also found in the parallel passage *Pañcarātra* II.

(12) The *MSS* read *s*.
(12) The *MSS* read *pakīḷanti*.
(14) The *MSS* read *karomi*.
(15) The *MSS* read *-īdam* which Weller finds 'sehr auffallend'; his conjecture, as reproduced here, is confirmed by *Pañcarātra* II.

APPENDIX III *The* gopī *story in the* Brahma- *and* Viṣṇu-Purāṇa

(1) Kṛṣṇas tu vimalaṃ vyoma, śarac-candrasya candrikām /
(*Kṛṣṇas tu* *śāradīnām*
ta*thā*[1] kumudinīṃ phullām āmodita-dig-antar*ām*[2] // 14
(2) vana-rājī*ṃ*[1] tathā kūjad-bhṛṅga-mālā[2]-*m*anor*a*mām[3] /
vilokya saha gopībhir manaś cakre ratiṃ prati // 15
(*drstvā* *manaś cakre ratiṃ prati*) (Hv 15)
(3)[a] *saha*[1] *rāgeṇa*[2] madhuram atî*va*[3] *v*anitā-priyam /
jagau *kala-padaṃ Śaurir*[4] *tāra-mandra-kṛta-vrataḥ*[5] // 16

B: *Brahma-Purāṇa*, Poona edition.
$B_{K,Kh,G}$: variant readings mentioned in footnotes in B.
V_B: *Viṣṇu-Purāṇa*, Bombay edition.
V_C: ditto, Calcutta edition.
V_G: ditto, Gita-Press edition, Gorakhpur.
V_a: $V_C + V_G$
V: reading common to all three ViP editions.

B has been taken as the basic text; it usually has more original readings, compared with V or any individual ViP editions. Sometimes B_K, etc., show entirely independent (from B or V) readings, but more often they agree with V, and thus have to be considered the genuine readings. In relatively few cases V (or an individual ViP reading) has been given preference to B, more for subjective reasons; so one could argue, especially for verses (73) and (77), whether B does not even here have the best reading.

However primitive this critical text of the passage under discussion may be, it certainly shows that any analysis solely based on *one* printed edition of a *Purāṇa* will be onesided or even distorted.

1: 1 tadā V_G 2 -ram V_B
2: 1 -jiṃ V_a 2 -āṃ m V_C 3 -har- V_G
3: 1 vinā V_G 2 Rāmeṇa B, V 3 -îva-lalitaṃ V_B
4 kamala-pādo 'sau B (but B_G as in text)
5 nāma tatra kṛta-vrataḥ B, but B_G: ... kṛtam Vraje; tāra-mandra-kṛta-kramaḥ V_G; nānā-tantrī-kṛta-vratam V_C.

(a) *Tāra*, still used in modern Indian musical parlance, is the technical term for 'highest octave' (compare No. 43); *mandra* denotes the lowest octave. I take *vrata* in the rather rare meaning 'dominion, realm'.
The difficult *kala-padam* (compare No. 5 *padânugā*) may be translated as 'melodious song'. Although MW does not give a meaning 'song' for *pada* (the nearest would be 'line of a stanza'), in musical parlance *pada* does denote (a type of) song (see Fox-Strangways, p. 286). On the other hand, both *kala* (in *kala-*

(4) ramyaṃ gīta-dhvaniṃ śrutvā santyajyâvasathāṃs tadā
ājagmus tvaritā gopyo yatrâste Madhusūdanaḥ // 17
(5) sanaih śanair jagau gopī kācit ta*sya*[1] *padâ*nu*gā*[2] /
dattâva*dhā*nā[3] kāci*c ca*[4] tam eva manasâsmarat // 18
(6) kācit Kṛṣṇêti Kṛṣṇêti *côktvā*[1] lajjām upāyayau[2] /
yayau ca kācit premândhā tat-*pārśvam avilajjitā*[3] // 19
(7) kāci*d*[1] *ā*vasathasyânt*aḥ*[2] sthi*tvā*[3] dṛṣṭvā bahir gur*um*[4] /
tan-maya-tvena Govindaṃ dadhyau mīlita-locanā // 20

(8) 1* tac-ci*ntā-vipulâ*hlāda[1]-kṣīṇa-puṇya-cayā tathā /
tad-aprāpti-mahā-duḥkha-vilīnâśeṣa-pātakā // (V 21)
(9)[b] cintayantī jagat-sūtiṃ para-brahma-svarūpiṇam /
nirucchvāsatayā muktiṃ gatânyā gopa-kanyakā // (V 22)

(10) gopī-parivṛto rātriṃ śarac-candra-manoramām /
(*gopīnāṃ cakravālair alaṅkṛtaḥ niśāsu śāradīṣu sacandrāsu*
mānayāmāsa Govindo rāsârambha-rasôtsukaḥ // 21
(*mumude*) (Hv 35)
(11) gopyaś ca vṛndaśaḥ Kṛṣṇa-ceṣṭā*sv*[1] *ā*yatta-mūrtayaḥ /
anya-deśa-gate[2] Kṛṣṇe cerur Vṛndāvanântaram // 22

(12) 2* Kṛṣṇe ni*ba*ddha[1]-hṛdayā idam ūcuḥ parasparam: /
"Kṛṣṇo 'ham e*ṣa*[2] lalitaṃ vrajāmy, ālokyatāṃ gatiḥ" /

5: 1 tatra V_B 2 layânugam V 3 -sānā V_B
4 -cit tu V_C
6: 1 prok- V_C; procya V_G; proktā V_B. 2 upāgatā V_C
3 avalambitam V_G; tat-prārthana-vil° B_k.
7: 1 -ic ca V_G 2 -ânte V_G 3 -itā V_B V_C
4 -rūn V_C
8: 1 -citta-vimalâ° V_G
11: 1 -âbhyāy° B 2 -deśaṃ gate V_a; anyās tv asangatāḥ B_K; I am tempted to see in this phrase the original *raty-antara-gatās* Hv 32.
12: The first line is missing in V_B. 1 niruddha- V_C
2 etal V_C

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dhvani) and *pada* (in *dvi-, tri-pada*) refer to metrical divisions or musical time, and thus it may be that *kala-pada* is a technical term for a particular tempo; but in that case we have no object for *jagau*.
Rāgeṇa appears the *lectio difficilior*; a copyist unfamiliar with musical termini could have changed it, thereby giving rise to further complications (note the variant *vinā*); for example, the BhP does not mention Balarāma in connection with the *rāsa* dance.

(b) *nirucchvāsatayā:* from MW we get 'state of breathlessness'; but alternatives are: '[even] without dying', 'in desolation', depending on the meaning chosen for *ucchvāsa*.

anyā bravīti: "Kṛṣṇasya mama gītir niśamyatām" // (V 25)
(13) "duṣṭa Kāliya! tiṣṭhâtra, Kṛṣṇo 'ham" iti câparā /
bāhum āsphoṭya Kṛṣṇasya līlā-*sarvasvam*[1] ādade // (V 26)
(14) anyā bravīti: "bho gopā! niḥśaṅk*aṃ*[1] sthīyatām *iha*[2] /
alaṃ vṛṣṭi-bhayenâtra dhṛto Govardhano mayā" // (V 27)
(15) "Dhenuko 'yaṃ mayā kṣipto, vicarantu yathêcchayā /
gāvo[1]" bravīti *câivâ*nyā[2] Kṛṣṇa-līlânu*kā*riṇī[3] // (V 28)
(16) evaṃ nānā-prakārāsu Kṛṣṇa-ceṣṭāsu *tāsu ca*[1] /
gopyo vyagraḥ samaṃ cerū ramyaṃ Vṛndāvanaṃ
vanam[2] // 24
(17) (babhramus tās tato gopyaḥ Kṛṣṇa-darśana-lālasāḥ /
Kṛṣṇasya caraṇaṃ rātrau dṛṣṭvā Vṛndāvane, dvijāḥ // (23))

(18) 3* vilokyâikā bhuvaṃ prāha gop*ī*[1] gopa-varâṅganā /
pulakâñcita-sarvâṅgī vikā*śi*[2]-nayanôtpalā // (V 30)
(19) dhvaja-vajrâṅku*śâbjâṅka*[1]-rekhā-vanty āli paśyata /
padāny etāni Kṛṣṇasya līlā-*lalita*-[2]gāminaḥ // (V 31)
(20) kāpi tena sam*āyātā*[1] kṛta-puṇy*ā*[2] *m*adâlasā /
padāni tasyāś câitāni ghanāny alpa-tanūni ca // (V 32)
(21) puṣp*âva*cayam[1] atrôccaiś cakre Dāmodaro dhruvam /
yenâgrâkrān*ti*[2]-mātrāṇi padāny atra mahâtmanaḥ // (V 33)
(22) atrôpaviśya *vai tena kācit*[1] puṣpair alaṅkṛtā //
anya-janmani sarvâtmā Viṣṇur abhyarcito *ya*yā[2] // (V 34)
(23) puṣpa-bandhana-saṃmāna-kṛta-mānām apāsya tām /
Nanda-gopa-suto yāto mārgeṇânena, paśyata! // (V 35)
(24) anuy*ātâinam atrânyā*[1] nitamba-bhara-mantharā /
yā gantavye drutaṃ yāti nimna-pādâgra-saṃsthitiḥ // (V 36)

13: 1-layā sarvam V_G
14: 1 -kaiḥ V_a 2 iti V_B V_C
15: 1 gopī V_C 2 vai câ V_C 3 -anusā° V_G; compare *Kṛṣṇa-līlânukāriṇyaḥ* in Hv 26.
16: tās tadā V Compare Hv (27): *tasya Kṛṣṇasya caritaṃ cerur vai.* 2 °vanântaram V_G
17: The original sequence of 16 and 17 is reversed because of the two interpolated passages. V replaces 17 by 3*.
18: 1 gopyo V_B 2 -āsi V_B
19: 1 aṅkuśâṅkâbja- V_B 2 -lâlaṅkrta- V_B V_C
20: 1 samaṃ yātā V_B V_C 2 -ṇya-ma V_B
21: 1 -âpa- V_G 2 -âkranta- V_G
22: 1 sā tena kāpi V_B V_C 2 tayā V_G, B
24: 1 -yāne 'samarthânyā V_C -yāne samaṃ cânyā V_B

(25) hasta-nyastâgra-hastêyaṃ tena yāti tathā, sakhi ! /
anāyatta-pada-nyāsā lakṣyate pada-paddhatiḥ // (V 37)
(26) hasta-saṃsparśa-mātreṇa dhūrtenâiṣā vimānitā /
nairāśyā*n*[1] *m*anda-gāminyā nivṛttaṃ lakṣyate padam //
(V 38)
(27) nūnam uktā tvarāmîti punar eṣyāmi te 'ntikam /
tena Kṛṣṇena yenâiṣā tvaritā pada-paddhatiḥ // (V 39)
(28) praviṣṭo gahanaṃ Kṛṣṇaḥ, padam atra na lakṣyate /
nivartadhvaṃ, śaśâṅkasya nâitad dīdhiti-gocare // (V 40)

(29) nivṛttās tās *tato*[1] gopyo nirāśāḥ Kṛṣṇa-darśane /
Yamunā-tīram *āgamya*[2] jagus tac-caritaṃ, *dvijāḥ*[3] // 25
(30) tato dadṛśur āyāntaṃ vikāśi-mukha-paṅkaj*āḥ*[1] /
gopyas trailokya-*gopt*āraṃ[2] Kṛṣṇam akliṣṭa-*kāriṇam*[3] // 26
(31) kācid ālokya Govindam āyāntam atiharṣitā /
Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇêti Kṛṣṇêti prāh*ôtphulla-vilocanā*[1] // 27
(32)[c] kācid bhrū-bhaṅguraṃ kṛtvā lalāṭa-phalakaṃ Hariṃ /
vilokya netra-bhṛṅgābhyāṃ papau tan-mukha-paṅkajam // 28
(33) kācid ālokya Govindaṃ nimīlita-vilocanā /
tasyâiva rūpaṃ dhyāyantī yogârūḍhêva *sā babhau*[1] // 29
(34)[d] tataḥ *kāś*cit[1] priyâlāpaiḥ, *kāś*cid[1] bhrū-bhaṅga-vīkṣitaiḥ /
ninye 'nunayam any*āś*[2] ca kara-sparśena Mādhavaḥ // 30
(35) tābhiḥ prasanna-cittābhir gopībhiḥ saha sâdaram /
rarāma rāsa-goṣṭhībhir udāra-carito Hariḥ // 31
(36)[e] rāsa-maṇḍala-*bandho*[1] 'pi Kṛṣṇa-pārśvam an*ujjhatā*[2] /

26: 1 -āśya-man° V_C
29: 1 tadā V_G 2 -gatya V_C āsādya V_G 3 tada V_B V_C; tathā V_G.
Compare *gāyantyaḥ Kṛṣṇa-caritaṃ dvandvaśo* Hv 25.
30 1 -jam V_G 2 -bhartāraṃ B_K 3 ceṣṭitam V
31: 1 -ha nânyad udairayat V_a (-īrayat V_G)
32: Compare *pibanti tasya vadanam* Hv (19).
33: 1 câba° V_C -êva lakṣyate V_B
34: 1 kā-cit B_K; kāṃ-cit V_G 2 anyāṃ ca V_G
B_K replaces the whole of the second line (ninye...) by *triyāmāṃ gamayāmāsa rasa-sparśena māninī*//
36: 1 baddho B 2 anûdgatā B 3 -jano na B

(c) Lit. 'making the surface of her forehead wrinkled by [arching] the eyebrows'.
(d) *ninye:* from the quotation from Bhoja and Abhinavagupta (see p. 604 note 23), where we find a *netā*, we may infer a technical meaning of *nī*: 'to lead the dancers/dance'.
(e) I am not sure whether the author did not have a pun in mind for *ekasthānâtmā*: 'having their souls totally dedicated to Him (~ ekântika)'.

gopī-jan*ena*[3] *nâi*vâbhūd[4] ekasthāna-sthi*râ*tmanā[5] // 32

(37) haste *pra*gṛhya[1] câikâikāṃ gop*ikāṃ*[2] rāsa-maṇḍal*am*[3] /
cakāra *ca*[4] kara-sparśa-nimīlita-dṛśaṃ Hariḥ // 33

(38) tataḥ *pravavṛte*[1] *rāsaś*[2] calad-valaya-nisva*naiḥ*[3] /
anu*yāta-śarat-kāvya-geya-gītir*[4] anukram*āt*[5] // 34

(39) Kṛṣṇ*aḥ*[1] śarac-candra*masaṃ*[2] Kaumudī[3]-*kumudâ*[4]kara*m*[6] /
jagau, gopī-janas tv *ekaṃ Kṛṣṇa-nāma*[5] punaḥ punaḥ // 35

(40) pari*vṛtti*[1]-śrameṇ*âikā*[2] *calad*-valaya-*lāpinīm*[3] /
dadau bāhu-latāṃ skandhe gopī Madhu*vighā*tinaḥ[4] // 36

(41) kācit pravilasad-bāhuḥ parirabhya cucumb*a t*am[1] /
gopī gīta-stuti-vyāj*ān*[2] *n*ipuṇā Madhusūdanam // 37

(42) gopī-kapola-saṃśleṣam abhi*padya*[1] Harer bhujau /
pulakôdgama-*śa*syāya[2] svedâmbu-ghanatāṃ gatau // 38

(43)[f] rāsa-geyaṃ jagau Kṛṣṇo yāvat tāra-tara-dhvaniḥ /
sādhu Kṛṣṇêti Kṛṣṇêti tāvat tā dviguṇaṃ jaguḥ // 39

(44) gat*e* '*nug*amanaṃ[1] cakru*r*, *va*lane[2] saṃmukhaṃ yayuḥ /
pratilom*ânulomena*[3] *bhejur* gopâṅganā Hariṃ // 40

(45) sa ta*thā*[1] saha gopībhī rar*āma*[2] Madhusūdanaḥ /
yathâbda[3]-koṭi-pra*timaḥ*[4] kṣaṇas tena vinâbhavat // 41

(46) tā vāryamāṇāḥ pitṛbhiḥ patibhir[1] bhrātṛbhis tathā /
(*tā vāryamāṇāḥ pitṛbhir bhrātṛbhir mātṛbhis tathā* /
Kṛṣṇaṃ gopâṅganā rātrau ramayanti rati-priyāḥ // 42
(*Kṛṣṇaṃ gopâṅganā rātrau mṛgayanti rati-priyāḥ* // (Hv 24))

4 câivâ ° B 5 -tâ ° V_B

37: 1 -ena gṛh ° V_G 2 gopīnāṃ V_G 3 -līm $V_{B, C}$
4 tat-kara- V

38: 1 sa vavṛte V_C prasanna-cittābhiś B_K 2 ramyā B, V_B
3 -naḥ V_a 5 ām B
4 anupātta-śirā-kāvyaṃ gāyantībhir B_K

39: 1 -am B_K 2 -nibhaṃ B_K 3 -īṃ ku ° V
4 -kusumâ ° B_K 5 evaṃ Rāmaṃ Kṛṣṇaṃ B_K 6 ām V_B

40: 1 -varta-ś ° B_G, V_C; V_B. -vṛttā (for -vṛtā?) B.
2 -âiva kācid B_K 3 -tāpinī, probably for °nīm and to be connected with latām.
4 -nipāti ° B_K ; -nighā ° V

41: 1 -bitam V_B 2 -ja-nipu ° B; $V_{B, C}$

42: 1 -patya V_C. -gamya V_G. 2 sas ° V

44: 1 -e tu gam ° V_B 2 -uś cala ° $B_{K, G}$
3 -ânulomābhyāṃ V_a; pratilomena mārgeṇa yayur B_{Kh}.
(Compare *Kṛṣṇasya gati-gāminyas* in Hv 26)

45: 1 tadā B 2 rarāsa V 3 sa varṣa-ko ° B 4-mitaḥ V_C

46: pat ° pit ° V

(f) *dviguṇa*: doubling the musical tempo (see Fox-Strangways, pp. 114; 251).

(47) so 'pi kaiśoraka-vay*o*[1] mānayan Madhusūdanaḥ /
reme tābhir ameyâtmā kṣapāsu kṣapitâhitaḥ // 43
(48) tad-bhartṛṣu tathā tāsu sarva-bhūteṣu cêśvaraḥ /
ātma-svarūpa-rūpo 'sau vyāpya[1] *sarvam avas*thitaḥ[2] // 44
(49) yathā samasta-bhūteṣu nabho 'gniḥ pṛthivī jalam /
vāyuś câtmā tathâivâsau vyāpya sarvam avasthitaḥ // 45

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(50) tataḥ prabhāte vimale Rām*a*-K*r*ṣṇau[1]-*balau*[2] /
Akrūreṇa samaṃ gantum udyatau Mathur*āṃ purīm*[3] // 12
(51) dṛṣṭvā gopī-jan*aḥ*[1] *s*âsraḥ ślathad-valaya-bāhukaḥ /
niśvasaṃś[2] *câ*tiduḥkhârtaḥ prāha cêdaṃ parasparam // 13
(52) "Mathurāṃ prāpya Govindaḥ kathaṃ Gokulaṃ eṣyati /
nāgara-strī-kalâlāpa-madhu śrotreṇa pāsyati // 14
(53) vilā*si*[1]-vākya-*jāteṣu*[2] nāgarīṇāṃ kṛtâspadam /
cittam asya kathaṃ *bhūyo grāmya*[3]-gopīṣu yāsyati // 15
(54) sāraṃ samasta-goṣṭhasya vidhinā haratā Harim /
prahṛtaṃ gopa-yoṣitṣu nirghṛṇena durātmanā // 16
(55) bhāva-garbha-smitaṃ vākyaṃ vilāsa-lalitā gatiḥ /
nāgarīṇām atîvâitat kaṭâkṣêkṣitam eva *ca*[1] // 17
(56) grāmyo Harir ayaṃ, tāsāṃ vilāsa-nıgaḍair *yat*aḥ[1] /
bhavatīnāṃ punaḥ pārśvaṃ kayā yuktyā sameṣyati //
(57) *eṣo hi* [1] ratham āruhya Mathurāṃ yāti Keśavaḥ /
Akrūra-krūrakeṇâpi[2] *hatâś*ena[3] pratāritaḥ // 19
(58) kiṃ na vetti nṛśaṃso 'yam anurāga-paraṃ janam /
yen*êmam*[1] aks*ṇor*[2] āhlādaṃ nayaty anyatra no Hariṃ // 20
(59) *eṣa*[1] Rāmeṇa sahitaḥ prayāty atyanta-nirghṛṇaḥ /
ratham āruhya Govindas; tvaryatām asya vāraṇe // 21

47: 1 -vayā B, but compare *kaiśorakaṃ mānayānaḥ* in Hv 18 (and also: *mumoda saha tābhir*, *ibid.*)
48: 1 -pī V_G 2 cātmany ava °B_{Kh}; vāyur iva sthi °$V_{B, G}$
50: 1 V reverses sequence 2 -dyutī V_G;$_B$ -matī V_C
3 prati V_C; -rā-pu °V_B
51: 1 -naś câśru V_B 2 ni(ḥ V_G) śaśvāsâti °$V_{B, G}$; niśvasya câ °V_C
53: 1 -sa- V_G 2 -pāneṣu $V_{C,G}$ B_k 3 grāmya-gopa- B (-K)
55: 1 tu B,V_B
56: 1 yutaḥ V, but ya- as variant in V_B comm.
57: 1 eṣâiṣa V 2 krūrenâkrūrakeṇ*âtra* V_a *-âti* °V_B
3 nirāśena $V_{B, C}$ nirghṛṇena V_G
58: 1 -aivam V_G 2 akṣara- B (-K); B_K replaces the whole line by: yo 'yaṃ yāti kṣaṇenâivam uktvā sarvaṃ sakhī-janam /
59: 1 evam V_B

(60) gurūṇām agrato vaktuṃ kiṃ bravīṣi? na naḥ kṣamam /
guravaḥ kiṃ kariṣyanti dagdhānāṃ *virahâ*gninā?[1] // 22
(61) Nanda-gopa-mukhā gopā gantum ete samudyatāḥ /
nôdyamaṃ kurute kaścid Govinda-vinivartane // 23
(62) suprabhātâdya rajanī Mathurā-vāsi-yoṣitām /
yāsām Acyuta-vaktrâbjo[2] yāti netrâli-bhogyatām[1] // 24
(63) dhanyās te pathi ye Kṛṣṇam ito yān*tam*[1] avāritāḥ /
udvahiṣyanti paśyantaḥ sva-dehaṃ pulakâñcitam // 25
(64) Mathurā-nagarī-paura-nayanānāṃ mahôtsavaḥ /
Govind*a-vadanâlokād*[1] atîvâdya bhaviṣyati / 26
(65) ko nu svapnaḥ sabhāgyābhir dṛṣṭas tābhir Adhokṣajam /
vistāri-kānt*a*[1]-nayanā yā drakṣyanty anivārit*am*[2] // 27
(66) aho gopī-janasyâsya darśayitvā mahā-nidhim /
uddhṛtāny[1] adya netrāṇi vidh*ātrâ*karuṇâtmanā[2] // 28
(67) anurāgeṇa śaithilyam asmāsu vraja*to* Hare*ḥ*[1] /
śaithilyam upayānty āśu kare*ṣu*[2] valayāny api // 29
(68) Akrūraḥ krūra-hṛdayaḥ śīghraṃ prerayate hayān /
evam ārtāsu yoṣitsu *ghṛṇā*[1] kasya na jāyate // 30
(69) *hā! hā! Kṛṣṇa*[1]-rathasyôccaiś cakra-reṇur nirīkṣyatām /
dūrī-*kṛto*[2] Harir yena so 'pi reṇur na *lakṣyate*[3]" // 31
(70) ity evam atihārdena gopī-jana-nirīkṣitaḥ /
tatyāja Vraja-bhū-bhāgaṃ saha Rāmeṇa Keśavaḥ // 32

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(71) priyāny anekāny avadan gopās tatra Halâyudham /
gopyaś ca prema-*kup*itāḥ[1] pro*cuḥ*[2] sêrṣyam *athâ*parāḥ[3] // 11
(72) gopyaḥ papracchur aparā: "nāgarī-jana-vallabhaḥ /
kaccid āste sukhaṃ Kṛṣṇaś cala*t*-[1]prema-*rasâ*kulaḥ[2] // 12

60: 1 madanâ- B_{Kh}
62: 1 V replaces the whole line by pāsyanty Acyuta-vaktrâbjaṃ yāsāṃ netr*âli*-(âdi V_G) -paṅktayaḥ // 2 âbje B
63: 1 -nty anivā° V
64: 1 -dâvayavair dṛṣṭair V
65: 1 -ti- V_G 2 -tāḥ V_G
66: 1 -kṛttā° V_G 2 -dhinâ° V_G
67: 1 vrajite Harau V_G 2 kareṇu V_B
68: 1 kṛpā V_G
69: 1 he he Kṛṣṇa! B; eṣa Kṛṣṇa-ratha° $V_{B\cdot G}$; hā hā Kṛṣṇa V_C
2 -bhūto V_G 3 na dṛśyate V_B
71: 1 -mudi° B 2 -ocyuḥ V_C 3 sêrṣyam ūcus tathā V_B
72: 1 cala-pr° V_G 2 -lavâtmakaḥ // V

(73) asmac-ceṣṭā*m upahasan*[1] na kaccit pura-yoṣitām /
saubhāgya-mānam adhikaṃ karoti kṣaṇa-sauhṛ*daḥ*[2] //13
(74) kaccit smarati naḥ Kṛṣṇo gītânugamanaṃ *kalam*[1] /
apy asau mātaraṃ draṣṭuṃ sakṛd apy āgamiṣyati // 14
(75) athavā kiṃ tad-ālāpair? kriy*an*tām apar*āḥ* kath*āḥ*[1] /
yad [2] asmābhir vinā tena vinâsmākaṃ bhaviṣyati // 15
(76) pitā mātā tathā bhrātā bhartā bandhu-janaś ca *kim*[1] /
na[2] tyaktas tat-kṛte 'smābhir? akṛta-*jñas tato*[3] hi saḥ // 16
(77)[g] tathâpi *kac*cid[1] *ālāpam*[2] ihâgamana-saṃśrayam /
karoti Kṛṣṇo? vaktavyaṃ bhavatā *Kṛṣṇa-hṛdgatam*[3] // 17
(78) Dāmodaro 'sau Govindaḥ pura-strī-*sakta*[1]-mānasaḥ /
apeta-prītir asmāsu durdarśaḥ pratibhāti naḥ" // 18
(79) āmantri*taḥ sa*[1] Kṛṣṇêti punar Dāmodarêti ca /
jah*asuḥ*[2] su-svaraṃ go*pyo*[3] Hariṇā *kṛṣṭa*-cetasaḥ // 19
(80) sandeśaiḥ *sāma*[1]-madhuraiḥ prema-garbhair agarvitaiḥ /
Rāmeṇâśvāsitā gopyaḥ Kṛṣṇasyâti*madhu-svaraiḥ*[2] // 20

73: 1 -ṣṭôpahasanaṃ B, V_B 2 -dam V_B
74: 1 kṛtam B (- B_K)
75: 1 aparā kriyatāṃ kathā V_B 2 yasyâ° $V_{B,G}$; tasyâ° V_G
76: 1 kaḥ B (-$B_{K, G}$) 2 santy° V_G 3 -jña-dhvajo V
77: 1 kvac° V_C; kaṃc° V_B 2 ātmīyam B (-$B_{K, Kh}$)
3 vacanâmṛtam B (- B_K); *Kṛṣṇa!* (Rāma! V_G) nânṛtam V
78: 1 -nyasta- V_C
79: 1 -taś ca V_G 2 -hāsa V_B 3 gopīr V_B
4 -hṛta- V_a
80: 1 saumya- B (- B_G) 2 -mano-haraiḥ // V

(g) It is difficult to tell whether the variant *Kṛṣṇa!* (V, -G) is original here (in which case No. 79 makes reference to it), or whether a later scribe took the inspiration from No. 79 and altered the text in this fanciful manner.

APPENDIX IV

The rāsa *dance*

It has been suggested above that Bhāsa employed the *hallīsaka* dance as a dramatic repertoire piece. Some evidence would suggest that this type of dance existed in contemporary society as a *real* dance. The purāṇic version of the Kṛṣṇa-*gopī* story replaced the *hallīsaka* by the *rāsa*, and as we shall see presently, the evidence here is quite strong for the assumption that also the *rāsa* was a *real* dance. In view of the great importance of the *rāsa* as a mythical theme, it seems appropriate to explore here a number of sources which provide information about this dance. It would be of interest too, if we could compare the two dances, viz., the *hallīsaka* and the *rāsa*, but our information about the former is so limited that this will not be possible.

The usage of the word 'dance' is conventional, but suggests less than a name like 'rāsa' in fact implies. The Br/ViP passage indicates that the *rāsa* includes not only dance steps, but also some form of acting, music, specific poetic themes, and to this we can add, also a particular poetic genre (*vṛtta*). Thus it will not surprise us that our information appears in quite a variety of diverse sources.

As in other branches of Indian learning, a careful distinction must be made between those texts which are based on a first-hand knowledge of the phenomena and those which discuss them solely on the basis of earlier textual material. In our case this means that certain works speak about the *rāsa* as a *real* art-form which was cultivated in contemporary society, and others speak about it because the purāṇic passages, poets, etc., have mentioned it.

7.41 *Neutral sources* I know of only one reference to the two dances which is presumably prior to the Br/ViP passage. This is the *Kāmasūtra* by Vātsyāyana, written during the Gupta period.[1] It is 'the earliest work now known which mentions some of the *uparūpaka* types'[2], viz., the art-form to which the 'dances' discussed here belong. This work belongs to a milieu very different from the Kṛṣṇaite traditions, but is closely related to the secular literary tradition. We read in it:

[1] Embree/Wilhelm, 1967, p. 131.
[2] Raghavan, 1963, p. 536.

> Through playing the *hallīsaka*, singing, the *rāsaka* that belongs to Lāṭa, through eyes wet and rolling with passion... [the lover should arouse the woman].[3]

The two dances, *hallīsaka* and *rāsaka*, are clearly distinct, both have erotic overtones, and they belong to the 'repertoire' of a sophisticated lover. Assuming the reading 'Lāṭa' to be correct, the *rāsaka* would then belong to an area (Southern Gujarat) which falls within the linguistic domain of Apabhraṃśa; the following sources, of a later period, are indeed connected with Apabhraṃśa literature.

The vast Jain *Mahāpurāṇa* (in Apabhraṃśa), composed by Puṣpadanta between AD 965 and 972[4], mentions the *rāsa*[5]. As in the previous document, the reference is to a *real* art-form. Here, moreover, it is specifically associated with herdsmen:

> Where the curds are churned very firmly...,
> where the churning rope is pulled by the *gopikā*...,
> where the *tāla*, manifesting joyful play, spreads,
> and where the cowherds, forming a circle, sing the *rāsa*,
> ...that cowherd station...[6]

Gopa, gopikā, and *goṣṭha* indicate the place and the social milieu in which the *rāsa* takes place. It was some amusement involving music and singing, and the herdsmen formed a circle *to sing* the *rāsa*. Although the contents of these songs are not indicated, they are very unlikely Kṛṣṇaite.

Virahâṅka in his *Vṛttajātisamuccaya* (written before the tenth century AD[7]) discusses three types of *rāsa* as literary forms,[8] one

[3] II, 10, 25: *hallīsaka-krīḍanakair gāyanair Lāṭa-rāsakaiḥ rāga-lolârdra-nayanaiś ...* // Bombay edition, 1891, p. 181; a variant *nāṭya-* (for the *lectio difficilior Lāṭa-*) is given in the footnote, but taken into the text by the Benares edition, 1912, p. 175.

[4] Alsdorf, 1936, pp. 2–5.

[5] XII, 11, 15.

[6] Vol. I, p. 215: *jahī maṃthijjai aithaddhu dahiuṃ* ...(1) *jahī kaḍḍhiu maṃthau goviyāi* ...(2) *jahī veṃti tālu kīlā-payāsu/ maṇḍaliya gova gāyaṃti rāsu* // (15) (*ghattā:*) *taṃ goṭṭhu*... Two marginal glosses render *-thaddhu* by *ghanam* (probably to be derived from √*stabh*, compare Skt. stabdha) and *maṃthau* by *ravikā*.

[7] Velankar, 1929, p. 35.

[8] The generic name in Skt. is *vṛtta*, commonly translated as 'metre'; but since Apabhraṃśa *vṛttas* are much more complicated structures, I prefer to translate it as 'literary form'.

rāsa and two varieties of the *rāsaka*.[9] Ignoring here the technical details,[10] the following points are important. The *rāsa* or *rāsaka* is a song-form closely associated with Apabhraṃśa literature. When used along with an *aḍilā*, the song is composed in the Ābhīrī language;[11] when used with a *ḍhosā*, the language is old Rājasthānī.[12] This provides a link to the cowherd station mentioned in in the *Mahāpurāṇa*, and to Lāṭa of the *Kāmasūtra* verse.

It may be legitimate to look at another text about two centuries later (c. AD 1150), viz., Hemacandra's *Chando'nuśāsana*.[13] Here[14] *rāsa* is referred to along with some more varieties (*rāsaka, rāsāva--laya*). Again it is treated as typical Apabhraṃśa song-form, and is associated with cowherds. But in addition, Hemacandra gives us some indication of the subject matter as well. He quotes an examples of a *rāsaka:*

> The night of the rainy season becomes violent
> for the man travelling abroad,
> when he listens to the *rāsaka*
> that is 'given' by the cowherd girls:
> his own beloved somehow falls into his heart,
> while his feet, as if fettered, do not walk on.[15]

Here the *rāsaka* is associated with the rainy season (and not with autumn, as in the Br/ViP passage) and thus with the theme of separation (*viraha*).

We know of one concrete *rāsaka*, Bhejjala's *Rādhāvipralambha* (written not later than the tenth century AD[16]) in Saindhava

[9] IV, 85; IV, 37 and 38.

[10] See for another early discussion of the *rāsaka* as a *vṛtta Svayambhūchandaḥ* VIII, 49–52.

[11] IV, 38; 32; compare the various notes and cross-references by Velankar.

[12] IV, 38, 35; and 36.

[13] He was a Jain author from Gujarat and thus must have been familiar with the Apabhraṃśa literary tradition.

[14] *Chando°* V, 3, 4, 16, 26.

[15] *Govī-aṇa-dijjaṃtaya-rāsaya nisuṇaṃtahā*
vāsā-ratti pahuccaï pahiahā pavasaṃtahā /
nia-vallaha tīva kevvaī hiayaṃtari nivaḍia
jīva jaṃtaha na vahaṃti calaṇa nāvaï niaḍia // V, 4–1.
Notice the remarkable similarity with Hāla 128, which might even have been the model for the poem.

[16] Since both Abhinavagupta and Bhoja refer to it separately.

'Prakrit'.[17] From the title and the various extant fragments of this play it is clear that it is a musical play on Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa, with the theme of Rādhā's separation (vipralambha = viraha) from Kṛṣṇa.[18]

A second *rāsaka* of a slightly later date[19] has actually been preserved: the *Sandeśa-rāsaka* of Abdul Rahman written in Western India and in Apabhraṃśa. The work derives its name from the second chapter, in which a wife sends a longing message to her husband who has travelled far away. This theme of *viraha* is also treated in the third chapter called 'Separation in the Six Seasons'. Thus here again, the *rāsaka* appears as a literary work in Apabhraṃśa, geographically linked with Western India, treating the themes of separation and the seasons.[20]

If we make allowance for a certain extension of meaning and function over the many centuries covered by our sources, the *rāsa(ka)* as described here appears as a *literary form,* combined with a dance, poetry and metrical pattern, and music. Geographically it belongs to North-Western India, socially to a popular Apabhraṃśa milieu in which the cowherds (or more precisely, a tribe like the Ābhīras?) play the dominant rôle. It deals with the seasons (rains and autumn are specificially mentioned), and with separation. Only Bhejjala's play has a Kṛṣṇaite theme. The mean-

[17] So Raghavan, 1963. p. 891; but the passage on which he based this statement (from Abhinavagupta, quoted p. 890) simply says *Saindhava-bhāṣā*: this could be an Apabhraṃśa dialect of the Sindh area.

[18] Raghavan, 1963, p. 891, wants to conclude from the genre name, *rāsakâṅka*, that the play actually contains a scene with Kṛṣṇa's *rāsa* dance. But Raghavan (in 1963) ignores Apabhraṃśa literature; in the light of this tradition, we may translate: 'a dramatic act (*aṅka*) which uses the *rāsaka* literary form'. The references to this play by Abhinavagupta and Bhoja are discussed and quoted in Raghavan, 1963, pp. 889-91.

[19] See the Preface, p. 13, of the edition; the editors suggest 'before the twelfth century (AD)'.

[20] I have concentrated here on the oldest documents of which I am aware. If we had looked at later works (there are many *rāsas* in Gujarati and Rajasthani), the situation would have been much clearer. Yet one can doubt whether without analysing the intermediary stages (covering after all a period of almost a millennium) any conclusion derived from this later literature is directly meaningful in relation to our text, the Br/ViP version. On the literature of the period subsequent to that of the texts discussed above see Vaudeville 1962, pp. 40–52; 119.

ing of the word 'rāsa' is obscure; an etymology 'noise' has been suggested.[21]

7.42 *Scholastic sources* Given the geographical, linguistic, and social demarcations of the *rāsa(ka)*, it is perhaps not surprising that Sanskrit-biased authors have little to say about it.

A lapidary statement is found in an early Prakrit dictionary, viz., Dhanapāla's *Pāia-Lacchī-ṇāma-mālā*.[22] There, No. 972, *rāso* is explained as *hallīsao* (~*hallīsaka*). Apart from Bhāsa, the only other reference to this latter dance occurred in the verse from the *Kāmasūtra* quoted above, and there it was mentioned as *different* from the *rāsa*. This identity claimed by Dhanapāla for the two dances is, in my opinion, symptomatic of the approach of the Sanskritic poeticians.

A short definition of the *hallīsaka*, probably of the ninth century. AD or even earlier, is given by both Abhinavagupta and Bhoja in almost identical form:

> The dance [of women, *Bhoja*] which is danced in a circle and is known as *hallīsaka*, —in it there should be one [male] leader, like Kṛṣṇa [was the leader] of the cowherd women.[23]

The authors clearly associate Kṛṣṇa with the *hallīsaka*, and in fact are actually talking about the *rāsa!* According to Bhāsa's description, the *hallīsaka* did not have only one male leader, for all the boys, Balarāma, and even the old cowherd join into it. The definition quoted here corresponds exactly to the dance described in the Br/ViP passage. Thus in reality only the *rāsa* has been

[21] Thus Turner No. 10,725, connected with √*ras* (No. 10,652) 'to yell', 'to praise'.

[22] Written AD 972 according to stanzas 276–8; see Pischel § 35.

[23]

Yan maṇḍalena nṛttaṃ strīṇāṃ	*maṇḍalena tu yan nṛtyaṃ*
hallīsakaṃ tu tat prāhuḥ /	*hallīsakam iti smṛtam /*
tatrâiko netā syād gopa-	*ekas tatra tu netā syād gopa-*
strīṇām iva Murāriḥ //	*strīṇāṃ yathā Hariḥ //*
(Bhoja)	(Abhinavagupta)

Compare 'maṇḍalena ca yat strīṇāṃ nṛttaṃ hallīsakaṃ tu tat' in the commentary (twelfth/thirteenth century, according to Schmidt 1902, pp. 23-5) on *Kāmasūtra* II, 10, 25. The verses from Bhoja and Abhinavagupta are quoted from Raghavan, 1963, pp. 554f. Raghavan, who discusses the *hallīsaka* pp. 554f, and the *rāsa* pp. 561-7, ignores the entire Aprabhraṃśa tradition which alone can clarify the confused statements of the Sanskritic authors. The same applies to Raghavan, 1967.

preserved in later traditions, and even that only in the popular (partly Jain, but presumably never brahmanical) Apabhraṃśa literary stratum. The Sanskritic brahmanical writers, unaware of this segment of Indian culture, remembered the *rāsa* only as Kṛṣṇa's dance and therefore were bound to confuse it with the *hallīsaka*.[24] On the other hand, the evidence collected here appears to justify the conclusion that the *rāsa*, which was introduced into the purāṇic account of Kṛṣṇa and the *gopīs*, was derived from a real art-form current at the time.

[24] Another good example for this attitude is the *goṣṭhī*, which for the first time occurs in Bhoja as an *uparūpaka*, parallel to the *hallīsaka* and *rāsa*. I am convinced that it is invented as a 'dance' through a misunderstanding of *goṣṭhī* in Br/ViP v. 35. These Sanskrit poeticians worked with traditional textual material, and did not give a comprehensive *empirical* analysis of the contemporary literary scene. On *goṣṭhī* in Bhoja and later writers see Raghavan, 1963, p. 554; 1967, pp. 40ff.

APPENDIX V

Early Caṅkam Fragments

(1) *Maturaikkāñci* 590...599

Poet: Māṅkuṭi Marutaṉār

The poem depicts the country around *Maturai* and the life in the city itself, under the king (Talaiyālaṅkāṉattu cceru veṉra)[1] Neṭuñceliyaṉ II who probably ruled around AD 200 and was a younger contemporary of the Cōḷa king Karikālaṉ.[2] The following extract is taken from a description of the activities in the city during the late evening and the early night.[3]

kaṇaṅ koḷ avuṇar kkaṭanta polan tār 590
Māyōṉ mēya[5] ōṇa[4] naṉ ṉāṭ (...) 591
ccurump' ār kaṇṇi pperum pukal maṟavar 596
kaṭuṅ kaḷiṟ' ōṭṭaliṟ kāṇunar... 597
..... *paral uṟuppa* 598
kkaṭuṅ kaḷ tēṟal makiḻ ciṟaṉtu tiri tara 599

(2) *Perumpāṇāṟṟuppaṭai* 28...37

Poet: Kaṭiyalūr Uruttiraṅ Kaṇṇaṉār

The poem depicts the country and city of *Kacci*, better known by its Sanskritic name *Kāñcīpuram*, under the king Toṇṭaimāṉ Iḷan Tiraiyaṉ.[6] In the first extract, one bard recommends the king as a patron of the arts to another poet.

[1] 'The victor in the battle of Ālaṅkāṉam'; see Nilakanta Sastri (1966), pp. 126f.

[2] Ibid. Also Zvelebil (1973), p. 61, dates the poem to the early 3rd century.

[3] The commentators differ in their analysis of the passage, and I am unable to provide here more than a tentative rendering of the main elements; nevertheless, the crucial lines 590f seem clear.

[4] This is the Sanskrit *śravaṇa*, for which we find (see Turner 12,688(2)) also a very early Prakritism *śroṇā*. The Tamil *ōṇam* most likely derives from a later Prakritism (*s*)*sōṇa*. Note also the other Sanskrit/Prakrit loanwords *kaṇam* (Skt./Prkt. *gaṇa*), *avuṇaṉ* (~Skt. *asura*).

[5] From *mēvu-tal, peyareccam,* for *mēviya/ṉa.*

[6] Chelliah (1962) pp. 98 etc., considers this king to be a vassal of the Cōḷas; similarly the commentaries *ad locum* (see footnote 10). Naccinārkkiniyar (quoted p. 28) relates a legend about a Cōḷa king, in which the name 'tiraiyaṉ' is explained as 'who was carried ashore by the waves.' But the commentator (p. 28) refers to Rā. Irākavaiyaṅkār who rejected the hypothesis that the king was of Cōḷa descent and con-

yām avaṇiṉṟum varutum, nīyir-um 28
iru nilaṅ kaṭanta Tiru[7] *maṟu*[8] *mārpiṉ* 29
mun-nīr Vaṇṇaṉ[9] *piṟaṅ kaṭai, annīr* 30
ttirai taru marapiṉ uravōṉ[10] *umpal* (...) 31
pal vēṟ Ṟiraiyaṟ paṭarkuvir[11] *āyiṉ* 37
kēḷ avaṉ nilaiyē: 38

(3) Ibid. 371-3
The following extract is taken from a description of a temple outside the actual city of Kāñcīpuram, which the commentators probably correctly identify with *Tiruveḫkā*.
.....nīṭu kulai 371
kkāntaḷ añ cilampiṟ kaḷiṟu paṭint' āṅku 372
ppāmp' aṉai ppaḷḷiy amarntōṉ āṅkaṇ: (...) 373

(4) Ibid. 402-4
In the description of the town *Kacci* (line 420) itself we read:
nī niṟa uruviṉ neṭiyōṉ[12] *koppūl,* 402
Nāṉmuka[v] *oruvaṟ payanta pall itaḷ* 403

---

sidered him to be a Pallava. On the Pallava problem see 3.12, note 20. Similarly Nilakanta Sastri (1966) p. 126 states: 'There is no hint anywhere of his being related to Karikala or of his political subordination to the Cola power.' Nevertheless, he considers him to be a contemporary of Karikālaṉ (ibid.). Zvelebil, too, assumes an early date for the poem.

[7] Said to be < Skt. *śrī*; but even if the etymology is somewhat obscure, the word certainly denotes 'śrī' and Śrī/Lakṣmī.

[8] *Maṟu* simply means 'spot, sign, mole, freckle' and thus it cannot be decided whether his chest is literally 'marked with Lakṣmī', or whether this refers to the Śrīvatsa tuft of hair on Viṣṇu's chest.

[9] Prakritism, from *vaṇṇa-* < Skt. *varṇa-*.

[10] The MTL gives only the general meaning 'strong man'; the commentators on the other hand make it refer to 'Cōḷaṉ' for which there does not seem to be any basis other than the legend (see note 6).

[11] Although the commentator (p. 29), as also the MTL *ad locum*, equate *paṭar-tal* with 'to think', this can hardly be the meaning of the word. The correct meaning seems to be 'to reach; spread out, run', etc., which is actually found in the commentator's paraphrase 'if you think of reaching'. The tense formed by means of *-k(uv)-* most frequently functions as a verbal *modus*, here corresponding to a 'desiderative'.

[12] On this word see Appendix VI below; I take it to mean simply 'exalted one', i.a. to *Neṭu*-vēḷ. Since *here* the word refers to Viṣṇu, the commentators impose another etymology on the word by reference to the *Vāmana* myth, 'the one who grew

ttāmarai ppokuṭṭiṟ kāṇ vara ttōṉri, (...)[13] 404

(5) *Puṟanāṉūṟu* 56, lines 5, 6, 9.
Poet: Nakkīrar
This poem, by one of the most famous classical poets, praises the Pāṇṭiya king (Ilavantikai ppaḷḷi ttuñciya)[14] Naṉmāraṉ.[15] The genre is said to be *pūvainilai* (for which see 3.35). While in lines 1-4 and 7f Śiva, Baladeva, and Murukaṉ are mentioned, the extract translated here reads:

maṇṇ uṟu tiru maṇi puraiyu mēṉi 5
viṇṇ uyar puṭ koṭi viṟal veyyōṉ-um (...) 6
ñālaṅ kākkuṅ kāla muṉpiṉ 9

(6) *Puṟanāṉūṟu* 57, lines 2 and 3.
Poet: Kārikaṇṇaṉār from *Pukār* (=Kāviripppūmpaṭṭiṉattu)
The poem is in praise of the same king as *Puṟa*. 56.
pukaḻtal urrōrkku Māyōṉ anna 2
urai cāl ciṟappiṟ pukaḻ[16] *cāṉ Māṟa!* 3

(7) *Naṟṟiṇai* 32, lines 1-4
Poet: Kapilar.[17] *Tiṇai: kuṟiñci*
Māyōṉ anna māl[18] *varai kkavāaṉ* 1
Vāliyōṉ anna vayaṅku veḷḷ aruvi[19] 2

---

tall (as Vāmana, and measured the world)'. This interpretation is clearly secondary and artificial.

[13] Translated by Gros (1968) p. 307, who makes *koppūḻ* a locative depending on *payanta* (against the commentator's parallel construction). This interpretation is preferable and has been adopted in the translation given above.

[14] 'Who sleeps on the bed in the royal park'.

[15] The king is also praised in the following poem *Puṟ*. 57. Compare Kailasapathy (1968) p. 20, Vaiyāpuri pPiḷḷai (1967), vol. II, p. 1478. It is at least probable that the poem belongs into the third century AD, although certain features seem late.

[16] For parallels and variants of the very common phrase *urai cāl pukaḻ* see Kailasapathy (1968), p. 232.

[17] Probably the most famous *caṅkam* poet. His patron was the Pāṇṭiya chieftain *Pāri*, and after the latter's death the Cēra king Vāḻiyātaṉ (see Nilakanta Sastri, op. cit., pp. 121-2, where *c.* AD 190 is suggested as date for Vāḻiyātaṉ's son.)

[18] The commentators suggest 'great' for *māl*; but in view of the universal play on Māyōṉ's colour, 'dark' appears more appropriate.

[19] The *col-urai* paraphrases 'waterfalls... *on* the slope' which is possible.

ammalai[20] *kiḻavōṉ nan nayant' eṉrum* 3
varuntiṉaṉ eṉpat' ōr vāy ccol[21] *teṟāy* 4

(8) *Akanāṉūṟu* 175, lines 6-18

Poet: Ālampēri Cāttaṉār[22] *Tiṇai: pālai*[23]

veñ curam iṟanta kātalar… 6
ariya vañciṉañ colliyum paṉmāṇ 7
teri vaḷai[24] *muṉ kai paṟṟiyum viṉai muṭittu* 8
varutum eṉṟaṉar aṉṟē, tōḻi! 9
kāl iya neṭun tēr kkai vaṇ Ceḻiyaṉ 10
Ālaṅkāṉatt' amar kaṭant' uyartta 11
vēliṉum pall ūḻ miṉṉi murac' eṉa[25] 12
mā[y] *iru vicumpiṟ kaṭi*[y] *iṭi payiṟṟi* 13
nēr katir niraitta nēmiyañ celvaṉ 14
pōr aṭaṅk' akalam[26] *poruntiya tār pōl* 15
tiru vil tēettu kkulaii[y] *uru keḻu…* 16
taṇ peyal eḻili tāḻnta pōḻtē. 18

[20] The *col-urai* derives it from *am* 'beautiful'; I prefer a derivation *a-* 'that'.

[21] The usual meaning 'omen, utterance of an invisible speaker' will be found below, 3.44 p. 165. Here something like 'statement the truth of which is guaranteed by divine authority'; compare the related *vāy moḻi* 'revelation, Veda', in 3.641.

[22] The poet refers to the Pāṇṭiya king Ālaṅkāṉattu . . . Ceḻiyaṉ (who is mentioned in fragment No. 1 above), and thus the poem may well belong to the third century AD.

[23] Thus the editor, presumably based on lines 1 to 6 (note *curam* 'desert' in line 6). But lines 12 to 18, referring to the rainy season, must be classified as *mullai*.

[24] Compare *teriy iḻai* 'woman, as wearing choice ornaments' (MTL)—*teri* thus 'to choose, select'. Although presumably a stereotyped phrase, the commentator gives it a pregnant meaning: 'bracelet put on after selecting it for the purpose of showing her love for him'.

[25] The commentator connects *murac' eṉa* with Ceḻiyaṉ.

[26] Literally, 'on which fight/battle abides'; the commentator says: 'which is the cause of subduing the hostile activities of the Asuras, etc.'.

APPENDIX VI

The ancient Pāṇṭiya kings and Neṭiyōn

We may begin with the poem *Puṟa*. 9. In lines 8 to 11 we read:

'May our king (Palyākacālai Mutu) Kuṭumi (Peru-vaḻuti) live [for days] more numerous than even the sand of the river Paḥruḷi of good water, of Neṭiyōn who [celebrated] the ocean festival, who gave fine gold of reddish colour to dancers, and who [is his] ancestor.[1]

The *tiṇai* is given as *iyaṉmoḻi*, 'theme of extolling a hero by attributing to him all the noble deeds of his ancestors',[2] which fits here in the sense that Kuṭumi is obviously being flattered by reference to his ancestor Neṭiyōn.

But the word *neṭiyōn* could by itself simply mean 'exalted person,[3] and we find a number of attributes used to specify the person meant:

Neṭiyōn who [celebrated] the ocean festival (*Puṟa*. 9, 10).

Neṭiyōn who [celebrated] the famous festival.[4]

More commonly, it would seem, such phrases refer to gods:

Neṭiyōn mastering the battle-axe (=Śiva)[5]

Neṭiyōn with the bare sword (=Paraśurāma)[6]

Neṭiyōn with the thunderbolt in his broad hand (=Indra)[7].

Another attribute qualifying the same Pāṇṭiya ancestor is found in *Mat*. 61: 'descendant of Neṭiyōn with the beautiful garland on his chest'.[8]

Commentators and a historian like Nilakanta Sastri are not sure whether to regard this Neṭiyōn as a historical person, or as a mythical figure, viz., as Viṣṇu (or Paraśurāma, or Kṛṣṇa). Sastri speaks of the first Pāṇṭiya as 'an almost mythical figure'[9].

[1] *Eṉ kō Kuṭumi vāḻiya! taṉ kō cen nīr ppacum pōṉ vayiriyarkk' īṭṭa, mun-nīr viḻavin Neṭiyōn naṉ nīr pPahruḷi maṇaliṉum pala*. The river s name is *pal* 'much' and *tuḷi* 'water'. The commentator explains the connection of this 'mythical' king with the river as 'who made it exist', which presumably means: dug it.

[2] Kailasapathy, 1968, p. 195.

[3] The MTL gives in fact that meaning *ad locum*.

[4] *Patiṟṟu*. 15, 38f: *cīr keḻu viḻaviṉ neṭiyōṉ*.

[5] *Mat*. 455: *maḻuᵛ āḷ neṭiyōṉ*. Also TVM IX, 3, 10 *maḻuᵛ āḷi*.

[6] *Akan*. 220, 5: *maḻu vāḷ neṭiyōṉ*. Also PāḷTM IX, 9.

[7] *Puṟa*. 241, 3: *vaccira ttaṭa kai neṭiyōṉ*.

[8] *Polaṉ tār mārpi Neṭiyōṉ umpal*: compare line 763 and *Cila*. 22, 60.

[9] Nilakanta Sastri, 1966, p. 126.

Since the word by itself offers little explanation, we may look at some of the contexts in which it is found. In No. 2 (of 3.3) it occurs in a passage which postulates divine origin for the Toṇṭaimāṉ lineage. Four phrases from this passage may be compared with the following found in *Mat.* 60f and 763:

iru nilaṅ kaṭanta	*nilan tanta* (*Mat.* 60),
Tiru maṟu mārpiṉ	*polan tār mārpiṉ* (ibid. 61),
tirai taru marapiṉ	*nilan taru* (ibid. 763),
uravōṉ umpal	*neṭiyōṉ umpal* (ibid. 61).

Tentatively we can translate *Mat.* 60f as 'descendant of the exalted person with the beautiful garland on his chest, of great gifts given to (by?) the earth'. The striking parallels of phraseology would suggest that similarly to No. 2 a divine origin for the Pāṇṭiya lineage is postulated. Of particular interest are the phrases involving the root *taru-*. We have three such phrases with the object *nilam* 'earth':

nilan taru (Tiru):	*Mat.* 763,
nilan tanta (utavi):	*ibid.* 60,
nilan taru (Tiru):	*Cila.* 28, 3.[10]

It would be quite possible to translate all three examples as: '(Śrī/gifts) given to the country (by Neṭiyōṉ)', following the commentary *ad Cila.* 28, 3. However, a strict structural parallelism with *nilaṅ kaṭanta* 'who transcends the world' would point to a translation of *nilan tanta* 'who created the world'.[11] By the same line of argument we could derive from *tirai taru* 'brought [to life] by the shore' for *nilan taru* a translation 'born by the earth',[12] although I have no other evidence for such a conception of the Pāṇṭiyas as 'sons of Bhumī'.

Yet there are further alternatives; one would be to identify this mythical Neṭiyōṉ with Paraśurāma. We may first compare the following two phrases:

Paraśurāma who uprooted the crowd of kings: *Akan.* 220, 5;[13] Neṭiyōṉ who defeated the kings and appropriated the earth': *Cila.* 22, 56f.60[14]

If we assumed that Neṭiyōṉ in the second passage is Paraśurāma,

[10] The commentator identifies this Neṭiyōṉ with Ceṅkuṭṭuvaṉ.
[11] Taking the root *taru* in the sense 'create, beget, produce'.
[12] *Taru* in its most common sense 'give', and as in note 11.
[13] *Maṉ maruṅku aṟutta (maḻu vāḷ) Neṭiyōṉ̃.*
[14] *Mannarai^{y} ōṭṭi maṇṇ akaṅ koṇṭu ... Neṭiyōṉ.*

we could translate *nilan tanta/taru* as '(Paraśurāma) who appropriated the earth'[15].

But in two other cases, the commentators have identified Neṭiyōn as Kṛṣṇa. *Ad Mat.* 763 Nāccinārkkiniyar[16] paraphrases: '(a good teacher)... like Kṛṣṇa of great Fortune, who in himself has manifested all the worlds'.[17] Chelliah remarks: 'Krishna who taught Arjuna'.[18] Similarly, *ad Cila.* 22, 56ff the commentator equates Neṭiyōn with Kṛṣṇa and the 'kings' with Duryodhana, etc.[19] By itself the passage would also suggest a divine character for Neṭiyōn, who is connected with the 'god of the royal class'[20] who abandoned the town Maturai after the wrong done by the king. The guardian gods of the brahmins and *vaiśyas* are related to Brahmā and Śiva, and Neṭiyōn~Paraśurāma/Kṛṣṇa/Viṣṇu would fit perfectly well into this structural pattern.

The observations made here cannot suggest a definite solution to the problem of Neṭiyōn's identity. But the different ways of possible interpretation would point to the possibility that features of Neṭiyōn allude to Viṣṇu, Kṛṣṇa, or Paraśurāma, if he is not directly the god. If historical at all, this Neṭiyōn must have become a mythical figure for later generations who in various ways envisaged him in Vaiṣṇava terms. On the other hand, if originally the god himself, from whom the Pāṇṭiya lineage is then derived, the following late passage (a clear elaboration of No. 4, see 3.3) can be taken as corroborative evidence:

> [Maturai,] la ville fameuse est comparable à la fleur du lotus épanoui sur l'ombilic du Noir. Ses rues sont pareilles aux pétales de la fleur; et pareil au fruit précieux qui est au milieu de ces pétales, le palais du Seigneur.[21]

Maturai is seen here in Vaiṣṇava symbolic terms, parallel to the conception of Kāñcī in the earlier *Perump.*

[15] The root *taru* in the meaning 'to capture' e.g., in *Pura.* 6, 14. Perhaps BhG X, 31 may relate here: *Rāmaḥ śastra-bhṛtām aham* 'I am (Paraśu)rāma among (kings) who wield weapons'.

[16] Op. cit., p. 186.

[17] This interpretation ought to derive from BhG XI; *taru* as in 11?

[18] Op. cit., p. 279; *taru*, 'to teach' in the *Kantapurāṇa* (acc. MTL).

[19] *Arumpatavurai*, op. cit., p. 460.

[20] *Araica pūtattu . . . kaṭavuḷ.*

[21] *Paripāṭal* Fragment VIII, Gros pp. 160f (comp. p. 307): *Māyōn koppūl malarnta tāmarai/ppūvoṭu puraiyuñ cīr ūr, pūvin/iṭal akatt' anaiya teruv, am iṭal akatt'/arum pokuṭṭ' anaittēy aṇṇal kōyil.*

APPENDIX VII

Extracts from the *Cilappatikāram*, *Kalittokai*, and *Akanāṉūṟu*

(1) *Cilappatikāram*, canto 17: *Āycciyarkuravai*

1] *...Pāṇṭiyaṉ kōyilil /5/ kālai muracaṅ kaṉai kural iyampum ākaliṉ /6/ ney mmuṟai namakk' iṉṟ' ām eṉṟu /7/ Aiyai taṉ makaḷai kkūuy /8/ kkaṭai kayiṟu mattuṅ koṇṭu /9/ iṭai mutu makaḷ vantu tōṉṟumaṉ /10/*

2] *kuṭa ppāl uṟaiyā, kuvi^{y} imil ēṟṟiṉ*
maṭa kkaṇīr cōrum, varuvat' oṉṟ' uṇṭu/1/
uṟi naṟu veṇṇey urukā, urukum / maṟi teṟitt' āṭā, varu °...
nāṉ mulai^{y} āyam naṭuṅkupu niṉṟ' iraṅkum / māṉ maṇi vīḻum,...

3] *kuṭattu ppāl uṟaiyāmaiyum ... varuvat'ōr tuṉpam uṇṭ' eṉa makaḷai nōkki maṉa mayaṅkātē 'maṇṇiṉ mātarkk' aṇi^{y} ākiya Kaṇṇakiyuṉ tāṉ kāṇa, Āyar-pāṭiyil eru maṉṟattu[1] Māyavaṉ uṭaṉ tammuṉ āṭiya* **Vāla-caritai-nāṭakaṅkaḷil** *vēl neṭu kaṇ Piññaiyōṭ' āṭiya kuravai^{y} āṭutum yām' eṉṟāḷ, kaṟavai kaṉṟu tuyar nīṅkuka^{v}' eṉavē /*

4] *kāri kataṉ aṁcāṉ pāyntāṉai kkām uṟum iv-ˈvēri malar kkōtaiyāḷ /1/*

6] *a) āṅku / toḻu^{v} iṭai ēṟu kuṟittu vaḷarttār / eḻuvar iḷaṅ kōtaiyār / eṉṟu taṉ makaḷai nōkki / ttoṉṟu paṭu muṟaiyāl[2] niṟutti / iṭai mutu makaḷ ivarkku / ppaṭaittu kkōṭ peyar iṭuvāḷ // kuṭa mutal iṭa muṟaiyā 'kkural, tuttam, / kaikkiḷai, uḻai, iḷi, viḷari, tāram' eṉa / viri taru pūṇ kuḻal[3] vēṇṭiya peyarē /*

b) 'Māyavaṉ' eṉṟāḷ kuralai, 'viṟal veḷḷai / āyavaṉ' eṉṟāḷ iḷi

[1] *eru maṉṟam:* MTL 'open gathering-place for cattle'; but: *eru* 'animal manure' + *maṉṟam* 'common meeting-ground'; *tāt' eru maṉṟam*: MTL 'shady place at the foot of a tree used for dance, etc., by cowherds, as a place scattered with cowdung'; *tātu* 'mineral, powder, semen'; thus Edholm/Suneson (1972, p. 43) 'the common meeting-ground that was covered with cowdung and semen'. (In MW *dhātu*[1] = seven bodily secretions (semen one of them); but note *dhātu*[2] (rare) 'milch cow'— must *tātu* be connected with this?).

[2] *toṉṟu paṭu muṟaiyāl*: Edholm/Suneson (p. 42) have a somewhat unlikely translation, 'according to seniority'.

[3] *viri taru pūṅ kuḻal*: the commentator paraphrases this rather stereotyped phrase simply by 'Mātari', but it would be much more appropriate for young girls.

tannai—'Āya-makaḷ/Pinnai^{y} ām' enrāḷ ōr tuttattai, marraiyār / munnai^{y} ām enrāḷ murai /

d) *'vaṇ ṭulāy mālaiyai Māyavan mēl iṭṭu / ttaṇṭā*[4] *kkuravai tān uḷ paṭuvāḷ—koṇṭa cīr / vaiyam aḷantān raṇ mārpin Tiru nōkkā / ppey vaḷai kkaiyāḷ nam Pinnai tān ām' enrē ai^{y} enrāḷ āyar makaḷ /*

7] a) *avar tām / cen nilai maṇṭilattār karkaṭaka kkai kōottu / annilaiyē^{y} āṭar cīr āynt' uḷār— ... / kkurar. .kiḷaiyai nōkki 'pparapp' urra / kollai ppuṇattu*[5] *kkurunt' ocittār pāṭutum / mullai ttīm pāṇi^{y} enrāḷ /*

b) *... Pinraiyai ppāṭṭ' eṭuppāḷ /*

8] a) *kanru kuṇil ā kkaṇi^{y} utirtta Māyavan*
inru nam āṇuḷ varumēl, avan vāyil
konrai^{y} an tīṅ kulal kēḷāmō, tōli /1/
pāmpu kayir' ā kkaṭal kaṭainta Māyavan
īṅku nam āṇuḷ... / āmpal an tīṅ... /2/
kollai^{y}[5] *añ cārar kurunt' ocitta Māyavan*
ellai nam āṇuḷ... / mullai^{y} an... /3/

b) *Tolunai tturaivanōṭ' āṭiya Pinnai*
aṇi niram pāṭukem yām /

c) *iru men cāyal nuṭaṅka nuṭaṅki*
aruvai^{y} oḷittān vaṭiv' enkō yām
aruvai^{y} oḷittān ayara ayarum
naru men cāyal mukam enkō yām /1/

vañcañ ceytān Tolunai ppunaluḷ
neñcaṅ kavarntāḷ nirai^{y} enkō yām
neñcaṅ kavarntāḷ niraiyum vaḷaiyum
vañcañ ceytān vaṭiv' enkō yām /2/

taiyal kalaiyum vaḷaiyum ilantē
kaiyil oḷittāḷ mukam enkō yām
kaiyil oḷittāḷ mukaṅ kaṇṭ' aluṅki
maiyal ulantān vaṭiv' enkō yām /3/

[4] *taṇṭā*: the commentator specifies 'not transgressing the ancient rules'.

[5] *kollai puṇam*: while Ramachandra Dikshitar (1939, pp. 232f) translates 'upland' in both cases, MTL gives for *kollai* 'dry land; backyard, open space behind a house', and for *puṇam* 'upland fit for dry cultivation (=*kollai*)'.

10] *Māyavaṉ raṉ munniṉoṭum vari vaḷai kkai Pinnaiyoṭum kōvalar tañ cirumiyarkaḷ kular kōtai purañ cōra āy vaḷai ccīr kkaṭi peyartt' iṭṭ' Acōtaiyār tolut' ētta ttāt' eru manratt'*[1] *āṭuṅ kuravaiyō takav' uṭaittē /*

15] *enrĭ yām / kōtta kuravaiyuḷ ēttiya teyva ṉam / ā ttalai ppaṭṭa tuyar tīrkka vēttar / maruḷa vaikal vaikal... / verri viḷaippatu... korrattu / iṭi ppaṭai vāṉavaṉ muṭi ttalai*[y] *uṭaitta / ... Ṭennavaṉ kaṭipp' iku muracē /*

2) *Kalittokai* 102

kaṇṇ akaṉ iru vicumpir kataḷ peyal kalant' ērra /1
taṇ ṇarum piṭavamun tavaḷ koṭi ttaḷavamum /2
vaṇṇa vaṇ ṭōnriyum vayaṅk' iṉar kkonraiyum /3
... tutaiya /4 taḷaiyuṅ kōtaiyum ... /5
... taiiṉar ... /6
maṭa moli[y] *āyattavaruḷ ivaḷ yār /7*
uṭampōṭ' enn uyir pukkavaḷ inru /8

ō ō ivaḷ poru pukal nall ēru koḷpavar allāl /9
tiru mā mey tīṇṭ' alar enru karumam ā /10
ellāruṅ kēṭpa araint' araint' eppoḷutuñ /11
collār rara ppaṭṭavaḷ /12

... maṇi purai nimir tōḷ piṇaii[y] */25*
eruttōṭ' imil iṭai ttōnriṉaṉ tōnri /26
varuttiṉāṉ manr'[6] *avvēru /27*
ēr' evvaṅ kāṇā eḷuntār evaṉ kolō /28
ēr' uṭai nallār pakai /29

āṅk' iṉi /33
taṇṇumai ppāṇi taḷarāt' eḷūuka /34
paṇṇ amai[y] *iṉ cīr kkuravaiyuḷ teṇ kaṇṇi /35*
ttiṇ ṭōḷ tiral oḷi māya ppōr mā mēṉi /36
an tuvar āṭai ppotuvaṉōṭ' āynta /37
muruvalāḷ meṉ rōḷ pārāṭṭi cciru kuṭi / 38
manram[7] *parantat' urai //39*

(3) *Kalittokai* 103

mātar makaḷirum maintarum ... /61

[6] *manru* could be taken as a locative, 'on the village arena'.
[7] *ciru kuṭi manram* is connected by the commentator with *kuravai* in line 35.

tāt' eru manratt' ayarvar talūu |62
koll ērru kkōṭ' añcuvānai marumaiyum | 63
pullāḷē āya makaḷ |64
añcār kolai[y] ēru koḷpavar allatai |65
neñc' ilār tōytark' ariya[v] uyir turantu |66
naivārā[8] āya makaḷ tōḷ |67
vilai vēṇṭār emm inatt' āyar makaḷir |71
kolai[y] ērru kkōṭṭ' iṭai ttām vīlvār mārpin |72
mulai[y] iṭai ppōla ppukin |73

(4) *Akanāṉūru* 59

... tuṇai malar | 1
pperun takai ilanta kaṇṇinai, peritum |2
varuntinai, vāliyar, nīyē. vaṭāatu | 3
vaṇ punal Tolunai vār maṇal akan turai |4
aṇṭar makaḷir taṇ talai uṭīiyar |5
maram cela mititta Māal pōla |6
ppun talai maṭa ppiṭi uṇīiyar am kulai |7
neṭu nilai yāam orri naṉai kavuḷ |8
paṭi ñimiru kaṭiyum kaḷirē, tōli, |9
cūr[9] maruṅku arutta cuṭar ilai neṭu vēl |10
ciṉam miku Murukan taṇ Paraṅkunrattu |11
Antuvan pāṭiya cantu kelu neṭu varai |12
... cunai īr-aṇi[10] ppolinta | 13
taṇ naruṅ kalu-nīr cceṇ iyar ciru-puram | 14
tām pārāṭṭiya kālaiyum uḷḷār |15
... ppaṇai ttōḷ nekila, ccēy nāṭṭu |16
aruñ ceyar poruṭ piṇi munni nap- |17
pirintu cēṇ urainar cenra ārē. |18

[8] I take *naivārā* as negative of *nai-varutal*, which is said to mean 'to be distressed' by the MTL (*ad locum*), but for *Pura.* the MTL mentions 'to have pity', the meaning adopted here.

[9] *Cūr*: the general meaning is 'affliction, disease', or personified 'malignant deity'. In Murukan mythology, it then means the demon Cūrapatuman (=Śūrapadma). See MTL *ad cūr*[5] and for the story Chelliah 1962, p. 334. *Maruṅku* could mean 'body' or 'host, crowd'.

[10] *Īr-aṇi*: compare *Pari.* 7, 61, translated according to the MTL.

APPENDIX VIII

Bullfight and kuravai

The following points will be investigated here: whether it is possible to assume *real* customs which constitute the background to the poetic descriptions in *Kali.* and *Cila.*; bullfight and *kuravai* in Southern Kṛṣṇa mythology; religious implications in the actual performance of the bullfight and *kuravai*; the relationship of these customs to the poetic theory of the *akattiṇai*.

(1) The few poems in *Kali.* appear to be the *only* references in the *caṅkam corpus* to the bullfight. I have been unable to find any further mention of it in other *caṅkam* works.[1] On the other hand, that this custom cannot just be the product of the poet's imagination is borne out by the fact that it is known even in modern Tamilnadu.[2] But more helpful for our purposes is another form of bull-baiting which has undergone less transformation during the centuries and has preserved archaic features that closely resemble—even to the extent of verbal resonances—the description of the *Kali.*: viz., the ritual practised by the Todas in the Nilgiri hills. This evidence has been dealt with separately in the following Appendix IX.

[1] To check this is much more difficult than for the *kuravai*, because the *Index des Mots* has no separate entry *ēru-koḷ/-taḻuvu*. By themselves, the noun *ēru* and the verbs *koḷ* and *taḻuvu* occur in very many contexts. But Subrahmanian in his *Pre-Pallava Index* mentions only *Kali.* 102-8; the MTL quotes only medieval commentaries on the *Tolk.* I have checked all references to *ēru* in the *Kuṟu.*, but did not find any reference to the bullfight.

[2] Kailasapathy, 1968, p. 13, note 4: 'Bull-baiting is still popular in certain parts of South India.' He refers to E. S. Varadaraja Iyer's translation of the *Tolk.* (Book III, Vol. I, part 1, p. 33). V. R. Ramachandra Dikshitar, 1939, p. 230, note 1: 'One can see a remnant of this institution [= bull-baiting] surviving today in the form of mimic shows on the Māṭṭu-Pongal day following Pongal festival every year, in the middle of January. Selected bulls are let loose in the villages with new towels and other things tied to their necks or horns. Many people of all castes come from neighbouring villages and take part in the contest to bring the animal under control. But now it has lost all connection with marriage.' Edholm/Suneson (1972, p. 48, note 64) refer to further authorities (Thurston, Zvelebil, Allchin). But unaware of the difficulties and allusions in the treatment of the bullfight in the *Āycci.* and *Kali.*, they treat it merely as a secular custom, without reference to further, viz., Kṛṣṇaite, dimensions. Compare Zvelebil, 1968/9 and 1962.

The bullfight mentioned in the *Kali.* is concluded by a dance called *kuravai*, and the same name is given to the dance of the *āycciyar*. Unlike the bullfight, dances of that name are frequently mentioned in all layers of the *caṅkam corpus*.[3] We can distinguish three closely related types of *kuravai* which, in turn, differ markedly from a fourth type, the one associated with the *mullaittiṇai*:

(a) The *kuravai* danced by hill-people (*kuṟiñci*):

akam: Naṟ. 276, 7-10 (almost verbatim repeated in *Puṟa.* 129, 1-4); *Akan.* 232, 9f.

'...when you have seen the *kuravai* in the court-yard with the *vēṅkai* tree, drinking the liquor that matured in the bent bamboo on the lofty hills...' (*Naṟ.*)

'...where hillmen dance the *kuravai* with young girls of their household in the court-yard decorated with large rocks...' (*Akan.*)

descriptive: Mal. 320-2; also in the late *Tirumurukāṟṟuppaṭai* 194-7.

'...the *kuravai* that is danced high up on the sky-touching mountains by the hillmen and their women, who have drunk liquor,.. while the small drum [covered with] deer-skin resounds...' (*Mal.*)

'...hillmen dance the *kuravai* to the *toṇṭaka* drum, inebriated by the liquor made from honey, which matured in the long bamboos.' (*Tirumu.*)

religious: Kali. 39, 26-9; *Cila.* 24

While in the previous quotations the association of this *kuravai* with Murukaṉ is implied in the *kuṟiñci* setting, here now explicit reference is made to this god and the religious significance of the dance.

'O you of bright ornaments! Join in our *kuravai* and sing its songs, so that you and your lover can unite. We are holding hands and joyfully dance the *kuravai* to please the god who lives on the mountains.' (*Kali.*)

[3] Practically all references given in the *Index des Mots* for *kuravai* are taken into account here. *Taḷūu*, which is found as a synonym for *kuravai* mostly in the *Kali.*, occurs at *Kali.* 103, 62; 104, 62; 106, 33. In *Mat.* 614, *taḷūu ppiṇaiyūu* could either be rendered 'joining together by holding hands', or 'holding hands, joining in the *taḷūu*'.

Canto 24 of the *Cila.* is entitled *kuṉra-kuravai* 'hill *kuravai*'. Girls of a mountain tribe dance it by singing songs in honour of Murukaṉ. Also *Cila.* 25, 24f mentions a *kuravai* danced by the priest of Cevvēḷ; *Mat.* 614-7 describes it being danced in the town of Maturai by frenzied women in honour of the same god.

b) The *kuravai* as a war dance (*puṟam*):
Since Murukaṉ is not only the god of the hills, of love and beauty, but also of war and victory, the following descriptions do not refer to an altogether different type.
In *Puṟa.* 129, the chieftain Āy is addressed:
'Lord of the great mountain with jack-trees of sweet pulp, where the *kuravai* is danced...'[4]

'[the hero] becomes strong against those who do not honour him, by getting inebriated on the liquor of sweet honey and by dancing to the rhythm of the fiery *kuravai*...' (*Puṟa.* 396, 8-10)
'the heroes ... have drunk the fiery liquor and join in the rhythms of the cool *kuravai*.' (*Puṟa.* 24, 5f)

'... when angry men shout the frenzied *kuravai*.'[5] (22, 22f)

Tolk. III, 75 makes rather vague reference to the *'kuravai* of the chariot, before the king who has defeated warriors on chariots'.[6]

Cila. 27, 31 mentions 'ogresses with pitlike eyes joining in the *kuravai*'[7] on the battlefield and praising the fallen heroes.

(c) The *kuravai* danced by girls on the beach (*neytal*):
The descriptions are rather vague so that it is difficult to link this type of *kuravai* with the dance in honour of Murukaṉ.

'... resounding with the noise of the *kuravai* of the *paratavar* girls on the seashore with abundant sand and with screw-pine trees with bell-shaped flowers...'[8] (*Mat.* 96f)

[4] The following words are the same as in *Naṟ.* 276, 7–10 quoted above.
[5] *Ciṉamantār veṟi kkuravai/ōta.*
[6] See Kailasapathy, 1968, p. 196; compare Zvelebil, 1973, p. 108.
[7] *Kuḻi kaṭ pēy makaḷ kuravaiyiṟ roṭuttu.*
[8] *Parata(va)r* 'fishermen', and *muṇṭakam* 'screw-pine', are *karus* of *neytal*; see Zvelebil, 1973, pp. 98.100.

'... the bank where girls perform the *kuravai* on the white hilly sand...' (*Aiṅk.* 181, 2ff)

Compare *Akan.* 20, 6ff, which mentions a *kuravai* danced by girls on the beach after bathing and rocking on swings which hang from screw-pine trees, and 269, 19ff, where the girls, before dancing the *kuravai*, make dolls of sand on the beach.

We may include here also a reference to the *kuravai* set in *marutam*:

'... on the bank of the great tank, where in the shade of the *kāñci* tree the *kuravai* is danced by women after drinking liquor, who sing about their faithless husbands who betray them with prostitutes.' (*Akan.* 336, 6-10)[9]

The three main types of *kuravai* which we can derive from the various quotations, viz., a *kuṟiñci* dance of men and women, a *puṟam* type danced by warriors, and a *neytal* (+ *marutam*) variety danced by girls or women alone, agree on the whole on the orgiastic, wild and ecstatic character of the dance. We hear constantly of liquor, and sometimes of 'wild, fiery, frenzied'. Moreover, the first two types are both connected with Murukaṉ, while the sources for the third type remain silent on this point. This triple *kuravai* can be assumed to belong to the older layers of the *caṅkam corpus*, and moreover, the variety of stylistic contexts in which it appears seems to suggest that the poetry is dealing with *real* dance forms of the ancient Tamils, or better, that behind the poetic coding a real dance may be assumed.[10] An example like *Akan.* 336, 6-10 makes it clear that we must take into account also a certain poetic transformation: a 'marutam kuravai' with songs about the faithlessness of husbands with prostitutes clearly indicates the superimposition of *akattiṇai* conventions on any real dance.

But it is quite clear from the twenty or so quotations that no *mullai* type of *kuravai* is documented in the older layers of the *corpus*, viz., a dance associated with the *karus* of the *mullaittiṇai* or associated with Kṛṣṇa.

[9] Compare *Patiṟṟuppattu* 73, 8ff: '... [the bank of] the Kāviri where girls perform the *kuravai*.'

[10] It is a different question whether what the poems label 'kuravai' is always the same dance form, or whether the name could have been given to different types of dances indiscriminately. Since choreography, music, motivation, and—for the most part—songs of these dances are lost to us, this problem can obviously not be solved.

d) The *kuravai* associated with *mullai: Cila.* and *Kali.*
In addition to *Kali.* 102, 35; 103, 75; etc., which have been discussed in 3.533 (pp. 185ff), *Kali.* 104, 69-72 reads:

'O my female slave! What bold exuberance of the cowherd boy, when he joined in the *kuravai* we were dancing; he looked at us as if he were a powerful divine being, and said: "It is I who subdued the murderous bull. ."'![11]

There is only one reference to a *kuravai* which is associated with the *uri* of *mullai*, viz., *Cila.* 26, 116-21. There we hear of 'dancers from the western country (=Coorg)'[12] who performed before the Cēral king a *kāar kuravai*, a '*kuravai* associated with the rainy season'. This theme is borne out by lines 116-9 which mention the rains and the return of the husbands from abroad.[13]

It may be worth noting that these dancers are 'foreigners', that this *kuravai* is in no way connected with Kṛṣṇa, and that the association with the *mullai uri* according to the rules of *caṅkam* poetics is the sole example in the *whole* corpus.

Thus the *kuravai* connected with Māyōn which we find in the *Āycci.* and *Kali.*, is quite unique in *caṅkam* literature.

e) The modern usage of the word.
The MTL[14] says *ad kuravai/kulavai:* 'chorus of shrill sound made by women by wagging the tongue, uttered on festive occasions.'[15]
The DED[16] mentions also a Malayalam *kurava* 'shouting (especially of women)'.[17]
Among the Todas we find a 'shouting dance'; details are furnished in Appendix IX.

[11] *Toḷīii, orukku nām āṭuṅ kuravaiyuḷ nammai/arukkiṉāṉ pōl nōkki. ./kurūu kkaṭ kolai^{y} ēṟu koṇṭēṉ yāṉ eṉṉun/tarukk' aṉṟō āyar makaṉ!* Compare 108, 60f: '...women in the *kuravai* which they dance on the cattle place.'

[12] *Kuṭakar*, translated according to the commentator.

[13] Do these *kuṭakar* in any way relate to the *kuṭakūttu* of Kṛṣṇa, or to the *kuṭam* 'west' in which he is positioned in the *kuravai*? See note 206 *ad* 3.524.

[14] Referring to the *Gazetteer of the Tirunelvelly District*, p. 135.

[15] For the corresponding verb ~ *iṭu*,'to utter a chorus of shrill sound', the MTL refers to Loc[al usage of the word].

[16] Listing it as No. 1477 under *kural.*

[17] Compare above, *Puṟa.* 22, 23: '*shout* the kuravai'.

We may well be dealing here with modern survivals of the ancient customs which are suggested in the *caṅkam corpus*.

So far sufficient evidence has been collected to suggest that separately the bullfight and the *kuravai* were real customs among certain groups of Tamils. But the poems in *Kali.* would furthermore suggest that both customs are connected, the dance concluding the bull-baiting contest. This can be corroborated by extending our range of observation to the Todas (details are found in Appendix IX). Here we find the bull-baiting as part of the funeral ceremony; it is concluded by a 'shouting dance' in which songs about the hero (viz., the dead person) are improvised by means of archaic song-phrases. Erotic undercurrents are not altogether absent in the songs, and even the actual baiting is envisaged as sexually symbolic. All this suggests that both the Toda custom and the events described in the *Kali.* have their roots in an ancient South-Dravidian custom: bull-baiting concluded by a particular type of dance.

(2) When the *Kṛṣṇa-carita* became known in the South, it stimulated the development of further mythical episodes which have typically Southern customs as their background. Above all, we have the myth of Kṛṣṇa fighting bulls in order to gain Pinnai as his bride, and of his dancing the *kuravai*. Since these episodes are not known in Northern works, further material may be collected here.[18]

The Early Āḻvārs know of a myth in which Kṛṣṇa defeats one, or more frequently seven, bulls and thereby obtains Pinnai as his bride. Here are a few references.

[18] We have met with the myth in a spurious passage of the Hv (see 2.324 with notes 94f); this passage is alluded to by Appayya Dīkṣitar (sixteenth century) in his commentary on Vedântadeśika's (thirteenth century) *Yādavâbhyudaya* IV, 97. The verse of the *kāvya* reads: '(Kṛṣṇa) obtained Nīlā as the stake by pressing down [and hurting] the necks of seven bulls'. The BhP mentions the myth in two passages; these will be discussed in *Appendix* XI 2). Edholm/Suneson (1972, pp. 31f) add Vāsudeva's *Śaurikathôdaya* (c. 900 AD, p. 31) II, 17-24, and Rūpa Gosvāmī's *Lalita-mādhava* (sixteenth century) IX, 4 (p. 36) to the list of references. But I cannot agree with the same authors' statement (p. 49) 'In the Harivaṃśa (63, 16) it is said that Kṛṣṇa arranged bullfights and it is significant, ... that they precede the dancing of the *hallīśaka* dance.' As we have seen, no such dance is mentioned in the Hv, and the bullfight mentioned in 63, 16 is entirely different from what we find in the South: Kṛṣṇa simply enjoys himself by letting two bulls fight with each other, just as (in the next verse 17) he instigates cowherds to fight.

'He defeated seven black bulls in order to unite in marriage...' (1stAnt 62; similarly 83)

'The great Bull among the cowherds who brought down the bulls, so that the horns and the lofty napes of the bulls got hurt, pursuing them out of love for the girl...' (2ndAnt 62; compare 63)

'Who defeated the seven black bulls...' (3rdAnt 25)

'O you who terminated his strength,... standing in front of the bull ... for the sake of Pinnai!' (ibid. 49)

'He who destroyed the life of the bull for the sake of Pinnai...' (ibid. 85)

'Bringing down the neck of the strong bull for the sake of Pinnai...' (4thAnt 33, shorter 23)[19]

In these earliest references to the episodes in the *Prabandham*, the connection between the bullfight and the following *kuravai* is not directly stated. But in the following quotation both are mentioned closely together:

'Since, promised the bride, you jumped on the bull... and joined in the *kuravai* with the cowherd girl...' (TVM V, 10, 2)

In PTM X, 8, 9 we find:

'While Lady Śrī and Lady Earth were searching [for you], you had gone away, joined with the cowherd girl(s), and dancing, shaking your limbs, you united [with her/them] in the *kuravai*'[20]

Other references to the *kuravai* as Kṛṣṇa's dance are:

'He joined in the *kuravai*...' (1stAnt 54)

'Seeing that such is the *kuravai* danced by him of the black sapphire's complexion, his elder brother, and Piññai...' (*Maṇimēkalai* XIX, 65f)[21]

[19] The *Tiruccantaviruttam*, which I consider to be one of the latest works in the *Prabandham*, has many references: 13.33.40.41.42.55.92.99.

[20] *Āṭi^{y} acaintu āy maṭavāroṭu nī pōy kūṭi kkuravai piṇai... tēṭi Tiru mā makaḷ Maṇ makaḷ nirpa.* The reference to Śrī and Bhūmi would suggest that *maṭavār* is an honorific plural for Cowherd Girl, =Pinnai.

[21] *Mā maṇi vaṇṇaṉum tammuṉum Piññaiyum/āṭiya kuravai^{y} iḫt' ām eṉa nōkki...* Zvelebil (1975, p. 116) suggests the sixth century AD as the most likely date for this epic; this would make it roughly contemporary with the (final compilation of the)

Also the 'temple milieu' of Maturai (see 3.6) which is documented for a period roughly contemporary with the *Kali.* and *Cila.*, alludes to the *kuravai.*[22]

Thus both the bullfight and the *kuravai* as Kṛṣṇaite myths are well-documented. But the allusions to these myths do not make it altogether clear that even as a myth the bullfight and the *kuravai* constituted a composite whole. Structural considerations make it likely, however, that at least in the earlier period, when the myth was actually developed, both episodes constituted one event.

Table XXXI

Āycciyarkuravai	*Kalittokai*	Early Āḻvārs
bullfight → girl ↓ *kuravai* → Pinnai	bullfight → girl ↓ ↓ *kuravai* → girl	bullfight → Pinnai ⋮ *kuravai* .... [Pinnai]
mythical (only for *kuravai* explicit) epic (=of *āycciyar*)	lyrical (=of *āyar* in the *mullai* landscape)	mythical

(3) The *āycciyar* do not fight real bulls, and in their dance they only take on the rôles of Krsna, Balarāma, and Pinnai. The nature of the dance is based on 'the ancient rules and order', the girls stand 'in the order established since antiquity'. All this suggests that we are dealing here with a formalized traditional dance form in which Kṛṣṇa's myth is *enacted* by the dancers.[23] Its ritual character is borne out by the particular purpose for which the *āycciyar* perform it: to ward off the imminent disaster. The stereotyped final stanza 15], for which we have parallels in the *Kali.* poems, shows that the dance more generally is concerned with the

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Cila. Compare *Āycci.* 3] for a similar wording: *tammuṉ āṭiya . . . Piññaiyōṭ' āṭiya kuravai.*

[22] See *Pari.* III, 83 (in 3.62).

[23] Edholm/Suneson (1972, pp. 43f) speak of a 'mimical representation of some episodes in Kṛṣṇa's life accompanied by song'. They compare this dance ritual to 'the *hallīśaka* dance of the cowgirls in the *Harivaṃśa*', but as we have seen, no such dance is mentioned there, and even the mimical representations we hear of in Hv 63, 25-29 resemble the folk-dance we are discussing here only vaguely.

welfare of the Pāṇṭiya and his realm. Also the 'classical' *kuravai* (see type (a) illustrated above) revealed a religious motivation, only that there the god is Murukaṉ. Among the Āḻvārs we shall encounter traces of further folk rituals in honour of Māyōṉ and their appropirate songs.[24]

The nature of the events described in the *Kali.* poems may seem to be different. Obviously we are not dealing here with a formalized representational performance of a bullfight, but with a real one. On the other hand, these poems can hardly be said to describe a 'secular' event: note the many references to Māyōṉ in different parts of the poems; note 103, 51-5 where a direct parallel between the events and the Kṛṣṇaite myth is suggested, and above all the concluding stanzas in which the praise of Māyōṉ is linked with prayers for the welfare of the Pāṇṭiya and his realm. All this would suggest that the custom as physically executed possessed in the awareness of the participants a religious significance; the real bullfight and the concluding *kuravai* were 'evocative of Māyōṉ'.

Thus we can postulate the existence of certain folk rituals and customs in which typically Southern myths about Kṛṣṇa figure as the symbolism which infuses religious significance into these dances and other customs. We can then distinguish physically executed events (*Kalittokai*) and mimical representations (*Āycciyarkuravai*). 4) Neither the *Kali.* poems nor the *Āycci.* are purely descriptions of such religious folk customs as have been postulated above. Both sources present the customs in a transformed manner, that means, by imposing a further symbolism upon them. This is the *akattiṇai.* We noticed already above, at *Akan.* 336, that *marutam* poetic conventions were imposed upon the *kuravai* described there. Similarly a very profuse *mullai* symbolism has been pointed out for both the *Āycci.* and *Kali.* On the other hand, our survey of the *kuravai* in the classical *corpus* showed that a *mullai-kuravai* did not belong to the traditional repertoire, and we have also seen that the bullfight is not mentioned in poems other than the *Kali.* We could also say that the composite whole, bullfight-*cum-kuravai*, is unknown to the old *caṅkam* poetry.

After what has been said about this poetry as an 'ideology' connected with a noble hero,[25] it is not difficult to explain this

[24] See, for example, the *Tiruppāvai* by Āṇṭāḷ (4.351). These are songs for a ritual to be performed by girls in the month of mārkaḻi.

[25] Compare Kailasapathy (1968, pp. 10-6) on the type of hero accepted in classical

situation. The archaic tribal custom of bull-baiting had to be considered as a phenomenon outside the restricted and sophisticated area of classical bardic poetry. This is also the explanation of the commentators, who classify the bullfight poems of *Kali.* as belonging to *kaikkiḷai*, that means, as vulgar themes outside the noble *akattiṇai*.[26] By this classification, the commentators at the same time solve another problem, viz., the absence of the *mullai uri* in these 'mullai' songs. Since they do not really belong to the *aintiṇai*, *caṅkam* poetics does not require them to contain reference to the appropriate emotional situation of *mullai.* The lavish scattering of *mullai karus* merely makes it possible to include the poems in the general section on *mullai.*

This explanation, however, is not fully satisfactory, because it is based on normative thinking, making the *Tolk.* the absolute standard of reference. It does not explain *how* at this stage in the literary history such themes became included in *caṅkam*-style poetry. For this we must assume a general change in the social and literary awareness of Tamil culture during the 5th and 6th century A.D.,[27] which finds in folk culture an important stimulus to poetic creation and does not shy away even from the 'vulgar'.[28] The traditional *akattiṇai* provided with its *mullai karu* Māyōṉ a convenient slot into which Kṛṣṇaite facets of this folk culture could be inserted.[29]

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caṅkam poetry, and on the exception to it necessitated by the bullfight poems.

[26] *Peru. viḷakkam* p. 23, *ad* 103, 56-79: 'bullfight as a theme in *kaikkiḷai*'. The modern commentator Cōmacuntaraṉ (p. 3, *ad* 101) attempts to maintain the 'noble character' of the songs by referring to *Tolk.* III, 21, by postulating that 'cowherd' in the poems actually means 'the (noble) chieftain of the cowherds'. But at 108 (p. 57) even he is forced to accept that the hero and heroine are in fact low 'menial labourers'.

[27] It is difficult to be more precise here. One way of defining the motives behind this change may be by regarding it as a reaction against the pressures of pessimistic Jain (and Buddhist) *weltanschauung*, in the course of which the ancient humanism and anthropocentrism re-emerged. But we should not discard altogether another possibility—perhaps as a complement to the first one, viz., that Kṛṣṇaite folk culture itself was in some way *actively* involved in these changes. Thus it may not have been merely an outside poet who wrote about the customs of bull-baiting and *kuravai* as practised by the herdsmen, but possibly someone who himself participated in this popular Kṛṣṇaism. But naturally, all this is purely speculative.

[28] Zvelebil, 1973, p. 119; on p. 120 he speaks of 'echoes of folksongs'.

[29] We need not enter here upon a (speculative) discussion of the extent to which this literary treatment could have changed the character of the folk-customs. Thus

But the folk material which externally fitted so easily into the traditional landscape of jasmine, knew nothing of those features which should internally correspond to the *uri* of *mullai*: separation. Fighting with bulls and thereby gaining Pinnai as his bride, dancing with her the *kuravai*, and giving the *gopīs* leaf-garments—none of these episodes imply separation, but only merry love-making.

The following table may illustrate the results of our investigation:

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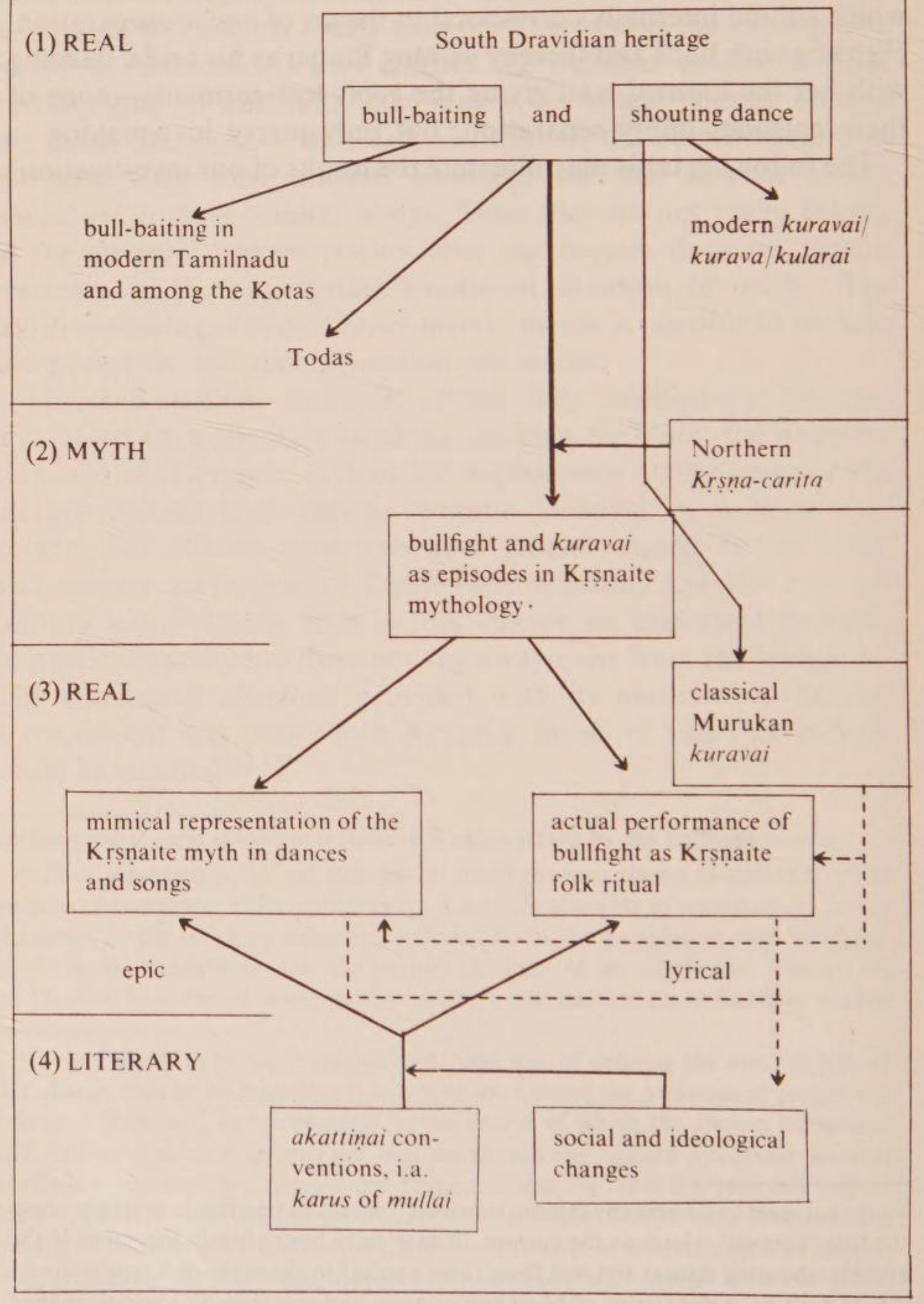
we do not seem to possess any criteria by which it would be possible to determine how the title 'kuravai' relates to the custom. It may have been already the name of the archaic 'shouting dance' and was from there applied to the myth of Kṛṣṇa's dance; it may have been denotative of Murukaṉ's dance, and was then by analogy applied to Kṛṣṇa's dance, or to the folk-dance enacting it; it may have been 'invented' by the literati in order to complete the pattern of the earlier poetry which knew of *kuravais* in all *tiṇais* except the *mullai*.

Table XXXII


(1) REAL
South Dravidian heritage
bull-baiting
and
shouting dance
bull-baiting in modern Tamilnadu and among the Kotas
Todas
modern *kuravai/ kurava/kularai*
(2) MYTH
Northern *Kṛṣṇa-carita*
bullfight and *kuravai* as episodes in Kṛṣṇaite mythology
(3) REAL
classical Murukan *kuravai*
mimical representation of the Kṛṣṇaite myth in dances and songs
actual performance of bullfight as Kṛṣṇaite folk ritual
epic
lyrical
(4) LITERARY
akattiṇai conventions, i.a. *karus* of *mullai*
social and ideological changes

APPENDIX IX

Bull-catching and shouting dance among the Todas

It has been suggested above that the bullfight concluded by the *kuravai* dance, which some songs in the *Kalittokai* and also the *Āycciyarkuravai* describe in a rather stylised manner, may have its roots in archaic Tamil (or perhaps better: Southern Dravidian) folk-customs; that the lyrical, epic, and mythical versions are based on a real practice. M. B. Emeneau's work on the Todas (To·r̲a·s̲),[1] a small Dravidian-speaking tribe living in the Nilgiris, contains references to a custom which in many ways, sometimes even in detail, resembles the 'bullfight' and the *kuravai* as depicted in the Tamil sources.

The Todas have traditionally been the producers of various milk-products for the other tribes (Kotas, Badagas, Kurumbas, etc.) in the Nilgiri caste clûster, their sole profession being the herding of buffaloes. The buffalo and the various milk-products form such a central part in the life of these people that, for example, Skt *deva-* or *daiva-*, which appears in Toda as *töw* (via the Tamil *teyvam* ?), has acquired here the meaning 'dairy'.[2] In other words, the Todas would have qualified as *āyar*, 'herdsmen'.

One of their most important rituals is the funeral, during which buffaloes used to be slaughtered. The following brief characterisation suffices to show some of the similarities of the custom to that depicted in the Tamil sources.

The *catching of the buffaloes* and *man-handling* of them to the place where they are to be slaughtered is a conspicuous opportunity for the *display of skill and daring*, and gives prestige to the young man. It is also dangerous, and at times men are gored. ...It is a constant *theme in songs*. At the end of a funeral there is *dancing*, and during the dancing the *dance composers* compose words, the *dance-song* (koṇ).[3]

[1] *Toda Songs*, Oxford, 1971. Emeneau has collected here 260 songs, and given an English translation. See p. xiii for a bibliography of further studies on the Todas, mostly by the same author.

[2] Thus we find in Emeneau, pp. 950-2 (= Concordance *sub verbo* töw): töw o·s elm 'all the dairies'. Compare p. xli, §40, and pp. 113-15 of the same author's *Toda Culture Thirty-five Years After*.

[3] Emeneau, p. xl (my italics). See p. xxi, plate 4, for a photograph of such a bull-catching.

It is in fact from such dance-songs, improvised according to very strict conventions and using archaic song-phrases, that the relevant features of the custom have been extracted here. The following three songs are particularly interesting: Song 95 praises a man for his skill in subduing buffaloes. In 118, a man who has been forcefully prevented from joining in the ceremony indicates his motives for participating. In song 142, the catching and man-handling of buffaloes is seen symbolically as sexual intercourse.[4]

> He dreamed that all the To·r̲ϑa̲s men who went to see the buffalo had intercourse with her [=his concubine, Samïl], and he composed this *koḷy xoṇ*. It is riddling in that 'she' ... ostensibly refers to the buffalo and its being caught, but really to Samïl and her having intercourse.[5]

Of particular interest is the fact that a number of song-phrases have very close similarity[6] to phrases found in the *Kali*.

1) 118, 3=26: *kwaly moy ïr / kwaly pï·r e·r̲*[7]
   'murderous barren [or: black] (female) buffalo/murderous fighting bull'.
   Translated into Tamil, this would be:
   kol (or: *kolai*) *mai eru(mai) / kol(ai) pōr ēr̲u*.[8]
   We may compare with this phrases in *Kali.*:
   kol ēr̲u: 101, 41; 103, 63; 106, 38.43; 107, 3.
   kolaiy ēr̲u: 103, 65.72; 104, 23.63.71.73; 106, 36.
   poru...ēr̲u: 102, 9. *pōr...ēr̲u* 103, 34.
   ēr̲r' erumai: 103, 43.
2) 118, 19: *may ïr xwï·ṭk / pï·r e·r̲ no·d̲yk (pï·xen)*
   '[I shall go] for the horns of the barren (female) buffalo/for the

[4] Compare for similar symbolism *Kali.* 103, 71-3 (quoted p. 188).

[5] Emeneau, op. cit., p. 460, introduction to 142; *koḷy* means 'riddling',~Tamil *kaḷ-* 'to steal...', *kaḷavu* 'deceit'.

[6] The Toda language is by no means just a dialect of Tamil; according to the information provided by M.S. Andronov, *Dravidian Languages*, Moscow, 1970, pp. 23f, it could have become separated from Tamil during the last centuries BC. When it is thus possible to render whole phrases into Tamil by simply employing *phonetic* correspondences (as found DED pp. xiif), this may be significant.

[7] For the occurrence of these song-units in Emeneau's *corpus* see his *Concordance*, pp. 831-961.

[8] *kwaly~kol* DED 1772 'murderous'; *moy~mai* 1) DED 4188 'barren', 2) DED 4187 'black'; *ïr~eru (mai)* DED 699 '(female) buffalo'; *pï·r~pōr/poru-* DED 3708 'fight, fighting'; *e·r̲~ēr̲u* DED 777 (comp. 3708) '(male) buffalo'. We can compare: *māl viṭai* 'black bulls' (found in the Early Ā̲lvārs, 1stAnt 62; 3rdAnt 25).

neck of the fighting (male) buffalo' ~ *mai eru(mai) kōṭṭukku/ pōr ērriṉ (imiṟku, eruttukku, eruttattukku) (pōvēṉ)*[9]
We may compare in the *Kalittokai*:
koll ērru kkōṭu 'horns of the murderous bull' 103, 63;
kolai ērru kkōṭu (ditto) 104, 63/4; 103, 72.
imil iṟa: 'that the hump wearies' 105, 31.
eruttattu ppāytāṉ: 'he jumped on the neck' 104, 35.
erutt' iṭaiʸ aṭaṅki: 'having settled on the neck' 105, 31.

3) The usual verb to denote the custom is *paṯ- (paṯy-)* 'to seize, catch'. This would correspond to Tamil *parru-* (DED 3320). E.g., 236, 40: *paṯyïð o·l* 'the man who caught (the bull)'; 107, 31: *patyïðïr* 'the (female) buffalo that was caught'. With this we may compare 138, 25: *patyïðmox* 'the woman whom he "caught", viz., married'.
The verb *paṯ-* thus corresponds precisely to the Tamil usage of *koḷ-*: 'to catch and subdue a bull; to marry a girl'.[10] Though there are no song-units that use *paṯ-* in both meanings in one line, we nevertheless find both objects together in a parallel song-phrase:
paṯyïðmox/o·ḍðïr 'the woman he married/the bulls he owned' (89, 21; 102, 27).[11]
Apart from the sexual symbolism of 'catching the bull' (Song 142, to be compared with *Kali.* 103, 71-3), the custom itself, as depicted in the Tamil sources, establishes the correspondence girl: bull; a man catches a bull, and *thereby* 'catches' a girl.

4) The place where the ritual takes place is the *twï·*, 'the corral, cow-pen'. In Tamil this is *toḻu (toḻūu)*,[12] and the *Kali.* poems mention it frequently as the setting of the 'bullfight': 101, 9.14; 103, 21f.58; 104, 17.59f; 105, 22.59. The 'bull-catching' ritual leads into the dancing connected with it, which is like the former an integral component of the Toda funeral ritual. This connection is borne out by parallel song-units:

[9] *kwiṭ~kōṭu* DED 1824 'horn'; Emeneau translates *no·dy* as 'neck'; does it connect with DED 2380 *ñāṟu-* 'to rise'? The Tamil words in brackets correspond to the meaning 'neck, hump on back of bull'.

[10] *koṇṭāṉ/koṇṭavaṉ* means 'husband', literally: 'he who caught'.

[11] *mox~maka(ḷ)* DED 3768 'daughter, woman': *o·ḍ~āḷ* DED 341 'to rule over, own'.

[12] DED 2905.

the club for beating the buffaloes/the pole carried in the dancing at the two-day funeral ceremony..[13]

In 55, 18, the second unit is replaced by .../'to dance with the feet'.[14] Other song-units describe the nature of the dance in more detail.

(1) *koṇ ṇaṣə xïs öštyïə ik / nöw naṣ ə xïs o·ṣtïə ik* 'you *composed song-words* beautifully / you *shouted a song in the dance* beautifully' (106, 38).[15] *koṇ* here denotes a particular genre of song and poem.[16] The two key verbs are *öšt-(öšty-)* and *o·ṣf-(o·ṣt-)*. Emeneau translates the first one here as 'to improvise, compose'; but by virtue of the corresponding Tamil *paliccu-*[17] and of other contexts (see below) it also implies 'to praise, worship'. The second verb means 'to shout while dancing'.[18]

(2) *o·ṭ ṇaṣə xïs o·ḍyïə ik / nöw naṣə xïs o·ṣtïə ik*

'you danced the dance beautifully / you shouted in the dance beautifully a song' (106, 42).

(3) While under (1) the connotation of *öšt-* 'to praise, worship' (in other words, a religious meaning of the act) was postulated, the following phrase-couplet corroborates this. *töw o·s elm pi·ïə ik / töw mil xoṇ öštyïə ik* (106, 48) 'you went to all the gods [=dairies] / you *composed song words* about the gods'.[19]

The same dual aspect of praising a hero and praising the god, which occurs here in the verb *öšt-*, has been noted for the *kuravai*.

It would seem to me that the various semantic, phraseological, and structural similarities which I have listed provide sufficient evidence for the assumption that both the Tamil sources and the Toda songs discussed here make reference to customs which originally must have been part of an ancient Southern-Dravidian tradition. This, we may postulate, was a (ritual) bull-catching ceremony with latent or overt sexual associations, and a concluding dance

[13] 6, 34: 35, 27.42, etc.

[14] *ko·le o·ṭ*; in Tamil this would be *kāl(āl) āṭu-* (see DED 1238 and 290).

[15] *naṣə~nal* etc. DED 2986 'good, beautiful'; *kïs~cey* DED 1628 'to make', thus literally 'making beautiful'; *nöw~navil* DED 2993 'to say, tell, sing' →'song.'

[16] The DED, 1792, under *koḷai* 'melody', gives for Toda *koṇ* 'words used in a dance song'. Songs 88 to 108 in Emeneau, op. cit., are examples of this genre.

[17] Suggested by DED 3298.

[18] DED 312 includes it under *ār-* 'to make a noise'; compare above the etymology of *kuravai* which would suggest a similar 'shouting while dancing, shouting-dance'.

[19] *töw* < *deva-/daiva-* 'god=dairy', see note (2) above; *o·s~?*; *elm~ellām* DED 718 (for Kota, missing for Toda) 'all'; *piᵗ-(pi·x-)~pō* DED 3734 'to go'; *mil?~mēl* DED 4173 'above, towards'.

in which improvised songs (of praise of a hero, and of religious significance) were shouted. The differences which we notice between the Tamil and Toda versions, would appear to be basically elaborations of this common heritage; only the Todas seem to link it with the funeral, while they do not know the *svayaṃvara* element or the Kṛṣṇaite interpretation—yet these may be nothing but idiosyncratic developments from the original 'religious' significance of the custom. The evidence is certainly convincing enough to reject the assumption that the bullfight songs of the *Kali.* are nothing but poetic renderings of the *mythical* bullfight of Kṛṣṇa. But it may suggest the positive assumption that both the myth itself and the songs have their origin in this ancient Dravidian custom, which in a certain Tamil milieu was given a Kṛṣṇaite dimension in myth and poetry.

Also the Kotas know of a 'buffalo-fight'; one story connects such a fight with the winning of a bride.[20]

[20] See, 'The exploits of Tuj Mal and Kaj Mal', in Emeneau, *Kota Texts*, vol. 4, pp. 243-55 (University of California Publications in Linguistics, vol. 3, no. 2, Berkeley and Los Angeles 1946). The reference is given by Edholm/Suneson, p. 53, note 88.

APPENDIX X

Āycciyarkuravai 11] to 14]

Three stanzas, along with an introductory passage, were excluded from the treatment of this canto in 3.52, because in my opinion they are of a later date than the bulk of the epic canto. For four reasons, I think, this assumption can be justified.

1) The stanzas do not really fit into the structure of the canto; while the remaining portion relates directly to the *kuravai*, they depart altogether from that theme. The only link seems to be the phrase 'the god praised in the *kuravai*' (15]2). At the time of a flourishing bhakti poetry, little actually seemed to correspond to this in the canto itself, and the stanzas may have been added to conform to the taste of the time. Another link may be the reference to the king (in the concluding stanza 15]).
(2) The poetic style is of a pronouncedly sophisticated, complex nature. The titles of the three poems are: *uḷvari vāl̲ttu* 'hidden praise', thus - *vyājastuti; mun̲n̲ilai* and *paṭarkkai paraval* 'praise in the second, third person'. Even the Tamil editor regards these stanzas as 'difficult'.[1] The artificiality of style would favour the assumption of a date not before the 7th or 8th century.
(3) For 13] and 14] some of the *later* Ā̲lvārs provide close parallels. There is no indication that either borrowed from the other; the stanzas here may be taken as examples of a kind of poetry which was not restricted to the works collected in the *Prabandham*.
(4) The general spirit of the epic is that of religious pluralism, but the present stanzas are clearly sectarian.

Thus the seventh or eighth century would appear as the most likely, earliest, date for these poems.

12] The three stanzas depict the royal attributes of the three Tamil kings: the Pāṇṭiya, Cō̲la, and Cēral. For instance: 'Sandal, a pearl pendant, and a garland of flowers of Indra are on the chest of the king of the Southerners.'[2]

[1] Or: 'rare', viz., *arumai* (p. 396).

[2] In stanza 1, *Kōvā malai*^{y} *āram, kōtta kaṭal āram, tēvar kō̲n̲ pūṇ āram Te̲n̲n̲ar kō̲n̲ mārpiṉavē*. A complicated play on the three different meanings of the word *āram* is found here. (1) 'from the mountains, which cannot be strung together' =

In each case it is then stated that in reality Viṣṇu/Kṛṣṇa is that king; for example: 'they say that he who wears the garland of flowers of Indra, is he who broke the *kuruntu* tree.'[3] This praise is ambiguous, because on the one hand one could say that the king is flattered as a personification of Māl, but on the other hand one could also say that the royal power is taken away from the kings and attributed to Māl. In view of the other cases which we encounter (see, for example, 3.64), in which 'king' is replaced by (the temple of) the god, the latter possibility cannot be discarded.

13] The poet addresses Kṛṣṇa, and referring to three powerful myths, he contrasts them with three degrading, humiliating episodes. Each time he says: 'This mystery *(māyam)*, does it not confuse our minds!' In stanza 1 we read:

O you who in former times churned the ocean! Your hand—the hand that churned—was bound by Acōtaiyār with a churning rope! This mystery, does it not confuse our minds![4]

Or in stanza 2:

O you who who ate the entire world without feeling hungry! Your mouth—the mouth that ate the universe—ate all the butter in the vessels hanging from the ceiling, you thief! This mystery, does it not confuse our minds![5]

The Āḻvār of Tirumaṅkai (8th century AD) has the following similar stanzas:

Has anyone anywhere seen a thing as strange as this? Our great lord who opened wide his mouth, so that [the universe] entered his golden maw, behold! today is fettered by the cowherd's wife for eating her curds and butter![6]

The great lord who churned the ocean, behold! today is fettered...![7]

14] These three stanzas state that the true function of the ear, eye,

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sandal wood or paste; (2) 'from the ocean, which is strung together' = pearl necklace (<Skt. *hāra*); (3) 'of flowers' = garland.

[3] In stanza 1: *tēvar kōṉ pūṇ āram pūṇṭāṉ . . . kuruntʼ ocittāṉ enpar-āl.*

[4] *Paṇṭʼ oru nāḷ kaṭal kalakkiṉaiyē / kalakkʼ iṭu kai Acōtaiyār kaṭai kayirrāṟ kaṭṭʼ uṇ kai / ... māyamō maruṭkaittē.*

[5] *Uṟu paciy oṉṟʼ iṉṟiyē ulakʼ aṭaiya uṇṭaṉaiyē / uṇṭa vāy kaḷaviṉāṉ uṟi veṇṇey uṇṭa vāy / ... māyamō maruṭkaittē.*

[6] PTM X, 6, 1: *Eṅkāṉum īṭʼ oppatʼ ōr māyam uṇṭē ... Emperumāṉ ... puka ppon miṭaṟʼ attaṉai pōtu / aṅkāntavaṉ kāṇmiṉ iṉṟʼ Āycciyarāl aḷai veṇṇey uṇṭʼ āppuṇṭʼ iruntavaṉē.*

[7] Ibid. 2: *kaṭalai kkaṭaintʼ iṭṭu ... Perumāṉ ... kāṇmiṉ . . āppuṇṭʼ inruntavaṉē.*

and tongue is to listen to the glory, to behold the beauty, and to sing the praise, of Tirumāl. The same Āḻvār wrote a song in which the first three stanzas refer to the eyes, ears, and the tongue, expressing the same idea.[8]

These three poems in the *Āycci.* do not only illustrate a new religious, sectarian, spirit, but also show that the poetry of the bhakti age and *caṅkam* literature are not altogether mutually exclusive or chronologically separated complexes.

[8] PTM XI, 7.

APPENDIX XI Evidence for the South Indian origin of the BhP

(1) *Three myths about Pāṇḍya kings*

(i) In Book IV we have the story of King Purañjana (chapters 25, 8–28), who in punishment for his crime is eventually reborn as the *daughter* of the king of Vidarbha. Having made a vow to marry none but the mightiest, she is finally obtained by 'Malayadhvaja the Pāṇḍya' (IV, 28, 29). 'He begot on her . . . seven sons, seven Draviḍa kings.' (v. 30) They also have a daughter, who is married by none less than Agastya, the Tamil culture-hero. Towards the end of his life, Malayadhvaja resorts to *Kulâcala* 'where there are the [rivers] Candravasā, Tāmraparṇī, and Vaṭodaka' (v. 35). From another passage (BhP X, 79, 16f) we know that Kulâcala is the abode of Agastya; in *caṅkam* literature this mountain is known as *Potiyam/Potiyil*[1]. The legend is not known to other *Purāṇas*.[2]

(ii) Chapters 1 to 4 of Book VIII narrate the story of Gajendra, who was rescued by Viṣṇu from the crocodile during the period of the fourth Manu. In 4, 7 we are told about the elephant's former identity: 'He was formerly a Pāṇḍya king, the best among the Draviḍas, known by the name Indradyumna, devoted to [observing] the vows of Viṣṇu.'[3] Verses 8 to 10 tell us that while the king was doing penance on Kulâcala, he happened to ignore Agastya because of his deep meditation, and Agastya cursed him to be reborn as an elephant. Though found in many other *Purāṇas* and also mentioned by the Āḻvārs, only here is Indradyumna said to have been a Pāṇḍya.[4]

(iii) Chapter 24 of the same Book VIII deals with Viṣṇu's Fish-*avatāra*, and the Vaivasvata Manu of the past *kalpa*. Satyavrata.

[1] *Potiyam*, e.g., in *Puṟa*. 2, *potiyil* in *Kuṟu*. 84. The mountain is in the Pāṇṭiya-nāṭu.

[2] This is, to judge from Dīkṣitar's *Purāṇa-Index*. However, the MBh knows a similar legend: III, 96 (Sorensen), but significantly, the Vaidarbhī is Agastya's own creation, whom he himself marries. Thus the BhP gives credit to the Pāṇḍya king by having him marry Vaidarbhī, and Agastya his daughter.

[3] *Sa vai pūrvam abhūd rājā Pāṇḍyo Draviḍa-sattamaḥ/Indradyumna iti khyāto Viṣṇu-vrata-parāyanaḥ* //7//

[4] For the Āḻvārs see, for example, 4.331.1 note 1; for the *Purāṇas*, see R. Dīkṣitar, op. cit., vol. I, p. 505.

The story of Manu and the fish itself is well-known,[5] less so the fish as Viṣṇu's *avatāra*, or the Manu's name Satyavrata.[6] But the BhP seems unique in making Satyavrata a Pāṇḍya king:

> Once he was performing the ceremony of offering a water-libation *(jala-tarpaṇa)* in the Kṛtamālā [=the Vaikai which passes through Maturai], when a fish *(śapharī)* was caught in the water which he held in his folded hands. Satyavrata, the lord of the Draviḍas, released the fish into the river water... (24, 12f)

Also in IX, 1, 2 the same Satyavrata is called 'lord of the Draviḍas'; the reference to the Kṛtamālā again shows him to be a Pāṇḍya.

These three legends all deal in some way with Pāṇḍya mythical origins. While the Manu myth makes the Pāṇḍya the ancestor of all mankind, the other two myths involve Agastya, the symbol of Tamil civilisation and the alleged author of the first Tamil grammar, as also the head of the mythical first *caṅkam* in Maturai.[7] Besides the river Kṛtamālā in Maturai, the Tāmraparṇī is mentioned which flows near the Kulâcala via Kurukūr, Nammāḻvār's home-town,[8] into the ocean. While this emphasis on, and detailed knowledge of, the Pāṇḍya country may seem odd in an early Sanskrit *purāṇa*, we have collected sufficient material on the archaic connection of the Pāṇḍyas with Vaiṣṇavism (see 3.36 and Appendix VI) to place these myths in their southern context without further difficulties.

(2) *Kṛṣṇa defeats seven bulls to marry Satyā*

On previous pages, the peculiar Southern myth of Kṛṣṇa defeating seven bulls has been discussed in detail. In relatively early Sanskrit works, we find the same myth, e.g., in the Southern recension of the *Harivaṃśa*[9] (as also Appayya Dīkṣitar noticed[10]), with Nīlā instead of Pinnai (see 3.712). The BhP mentions it twice, calling

[5] See e.g. MBh III, 187 (Sørensen).

[6] See e.g. *Brahma-Purāṇa* III, 11, 92.

[7] See, for example, Schomerus, in Glasenapp, 1961, p. 372.

[8] The Āḻvār mentions the river, as Porunal, e.g., in TVM VII, 2,11 'Kurukūr surrounded by fragrant groves, growing on the bank of the Porunal'. On Porunal = Tāmraparṇī see the MTL; also *Prapannâmṛta* 107, 14: *Tāmraparṇī-sarit-tīre Kurukā-nagare vare.*

[9] Hv Appendix I, No. 12; see 2.324.

[10] *Evaṃ Harivaṃśe kathā, ad Yādavâbhyudaya* IV, 97.

the girl Satyā.[11] The second version presupposes the first.

In Book X, 58, 32-53[12] we have the full story.

There was a very pious king, Nagnajit by name, among the Kośalas;[13] he had a daughter Satyā.. (32) Only if they defeated seven bulls with pointed horns who were very deadly, irritable, and did not endure even the smell of a hero, [other] kings could take her home [as their bride]. (33)

When Bhagavān heard of the girl who could be won [only] by someone defeating those bulls,... he went to Kośala along with a large army. (34) The king of the Kośalas rose delightedly to greet him... (35) When the king's daughter looked at Ramā's husband (=Kṛṣṇa), the bridegroom she was longing for, as he arrived, she prayed: 'If I have been faithfull,[14] may he make my pure desires come true: let him become my husband!' (36)

After polite greetings, Kṛṣṇa says to the king: 'O king! The sages *(kavi)* have censured begging by a *kṣatriya* who pursues his proper *dharma*.[15] Even so, I am *asking* you for your daughter, since I desire your friendship. For we do not pay [for what we take].[16] (40)'

In his reply the king says: 'But I have made formerly a stipulation, in order to test the heroes among men, for I wish to find [the best] husband for my daughter. (42) These seven bulls are valiant, undefeatable, and wickedly obstinate. They have defeated very many princes, their bodies gored. (43) If you were to subdue them, ... you would be the welcome bridegroom for my daughter, O Husband of Śrī!' (44)

When the lord heard this stipulation, he checked his retinue, and dividing himself into seven [Kṛṣṇas], he subdued them in mere play *(līlā)*. (45) Binding them with ropes, their pride broken and splendour destroyed, Śauri dragged them along fettered, like a boy (drags) in play *(līlā)* his wooden toys. (46) Surprised and pleased, the king gave his daughter to Kṛṣṇa, and he accepted her... (47)

[11] With a bit of imagination, Satyā can be derived from Nappinnai: either < *nam-pinnai*<*nampu* + *in* + (f) *ai* 'she who has faith/hope', or<*dto*:<*nanpu* + *dto* 'she who possesses goodness'. Obviously I am not suggesting that this is the real etymology of the name Pinnai. Edholm/Suneson (pp. 34-6), puzzled by the two names Nīlā and Satyā, do not see this possibility of explaining Satyā as an *ad hoc* translation of Nappinnai.

[12] Edholm/Suneson translate a few verses (pp. 34f); see p. 36, note 20, on a confusing account by Dīkṣitar (1937-8 p. 271) which the authors quite correctly recognize as 'mistake'.

[13] Their capital was Ayodhyā, famous as the town of Rāma.

[14] *Yadi me dhṛto vrataiḥ*; since *dhṛta-vrata* means 'faithful', I take the phrase to be a synonymous paraphrase *metri causae*.

[15] As explained below, this means a real warrior simply takes.

[16] I think there is good reason to see in this phrase a literary borrowing from *Kali.* 103, 71-3: 'no bride-price need be paid'.

After the celebration of the betrothal, Kṛṣṇa leaves with his bride for Dvārakā.
When kings whose pride had formerly been broken by the Yadus or by [those] bulls, heard of it, they obstructed fiercely [Kṛṣṇa] who was leading the girl on the road. (53)

In Book X, 83, 13f, Satyā herself summarizes these events:

The seven bulls with very sharp horns, great force, and valour, whom my father had driven together in order to test the strength of kings, were subdued and fettered easily by [Kṛṣṇa] the destroyer of heroes' wicked haughtiness, like young goats [are subdued and fettered] by children. (13) As prize for his valour thus displayed, I was taken by him [to Dvārakā] along with my servant-girls, and an army; on the way he defeated *kṣatriyas*. May I be [always] his slave-girl! (14)

The setting of the story is now the royal Ayodhyā: the master of the bulls is a king, his daughter the prize, and the whole event is described like a *svayaṃvara*; in the Hv apocryphon we are still among the cowherds—the owner of the bulls having a typical *gopa* name Kumbhaka.[17] Presumably the BhP versions are younger than that of the Hv-Appendix. But more important for our purposes is the fact that the myth itself is exclusively Southern. In fact, the BhP version (ch. 58) shows in many ways that its author wanted to present the myth in such a way that also a non-Tamil reader would understand and appreciate it. What, as we have seen, was a popular custom in the South, for the sake of the Sanskrit audience had to be presented as a *svayaṃvara*, and that due to a special stipulation by the king 'in order to test the strength of the heroes'. As a royal *svayaṃvara*, and along with the further explanations, the myth could be appreciated by a Northern reader, to whom a bullfight among cowherds was presumably unknown. For this reason, as probably also for the fact that the ViP does not know it as one of the Vṛndāvana episodes, the myth is given a new context in the *Kṛṣṇa-carita*, in the vicinity of the Rukminī episodes (Book X, 52-54), which like the myth of the bullfight, deal with a *wife* of Kṛṣṇa. From the nature of the Tamil bullfight Satyā necessarily had to become Kṛṣṇa's wife, which given the development of the *gopī* episodes in the ViP was impossible with Satyā as a *gopī*.

[17] In Bhāsa's dramas *Bālacarita* and *Pañcarātra* we hear of names like Dāmaka, Kumbhadatta—and to not to forget Dāmodara.

(3) The *tīrthayātrā*

BhP X, 79, 9–21 describes a pilgrimage to various *tīrthas* which Balarāma undertook and at the end of which (v. 22) he is informed about the MBh war. This reference may not be without purpose, for in the MBh itself (III, 80-139 SØ) we hear of a similar pilgrimage by the Pāṇḍavas, which may have inspired our author. A comparison between these two *tīrthayātrās* is revealing. The MBh deals with the extreme South very summarily: Dhaumya refers to it in his list of *tīrthas* (III, 88 SØ), and in III, 118 the Pāṇḍavas visit there briefly the Agastya- and Nārī-*tīrthas*; among the many hundreds of lines of this *parvan*, these few remarks are clearly of no importance. The BhP, on the other hand, makes the South the real centre of Balarāma's *tīrthayātrā*. Verses 9 to 12 briefly list a few places in the North, while verses 13 to 18 mention more than a dozen *tīrthas* in Tamilnadu and Southern Kerala, and with 19 to 21 we are rapidly taken back to the North. The importance of the Southern *sthalas* is further stressed by various attributes (missing for the Northern *tīrthas*): 'greatly auspicious' (13.14), 'best among rivers' (14), 'destroying the greatest of sins' (15), 'best among ponds' (18). Srīraṅgam and Anantapuram (=modern Trivandrum) are described as the places 'where Hari resides' (14 and 18), and Tirumāliruñcōlai (called Ṛṣabhâdri) is styled 'the *kṣetra* of Hari' (15). But it is interesting that the author refers to non-Vaiṣṇava places too: Kāmakōṭṭi and Kanyākumārī (14 and 17), two Durgā temples; Śrīśaila 'the abode of Śiva' (13); Agastya's abode, the Kulâcala (16f). These are the various rivers, temples, and towns mentioned:

> Among the Draviḍas, the lord visited the greatly auspicious Veṅkaṭa mountain (13b). Then he went to Kāmakōṣṇī, to the town (temple?) Kāñcī,[18] and to the best among rivers, the Kāverī, where Hari abides in the greatly auspicious [town] called Śrīraṅgam. (14) Then he went to Ṛṣabhâdri (= Tirumāliruñcōlai), Hari's *kṣetra*, and to Southern Mathurā; (then) to the Ocean-Bridge (Rāmêśvaram) which destroys the greatest of sins. (15) ... [Then] he went to the Kṛtamālā, the Tāmraparṇī, the mountainous country with the Kulâcala (16b); there he bowed down and honoured Agastya who

[18] Since in Tamil Kacci (Skt. Kāñcī) refers to the temple of Varadarāja, and since in Tamil *nakar* (Skt. *nagara*) denotes 'temple', and since I believe Kāmakōṣṇī to be another temple in the same town 'Kāñcī' (see 4) iii. below), 'temple' seems preferable.

is living there... then he went to the Southern Ocean, and there he visited the goddess Durgā called Kanyā. (17) Then he reached Phālgunam (=Ananta-puram acc. Śrīdhara) and bathed in the best among tanks [viz. that] of the five Apsarases (=Nārītīrtham[19]) where Hari resides. (18)

We may compare this disproportionate emphasis on Southern *tīrthas* with another passage in the *Purāṇa*, the Description of India (Book V, 19, 16ff), where out of twenty-six mountains at least five, and out of forty-two rivers at least eight, belong to the extreme South. Compared with the area covered, this is about ten times too high a proportion.

(4) *Some linguistic evidence*

The language of this *Purāṇa* is highly complicated for a number of reasons. One is the conscious attempt to imitate Vedic Sanskrit; another is the non-Pāṇinian morphology, and unconventional semantic usage of words.[20] If we accept the evidence of this chapter and assume that the author was a Southerner, one could suspect a Dravidian linguistic substratum (=his mother-tongue) to leave at least some traces in the Sanskrit employed.[21] Here I would like to mention a few points which I have noticed accidentally and which might be taken as indications of a Tamil substratum.

(i) BhP X, 3, 22 reads: *sa te 'vatāraṃ puruṣaiḥ samarpitaṃ śrutvā*. Śrīdhara paraphrases *samarpitam* as *kathitam* 'related', which the following *śrutvā* 'having heard' corroborates. Since the metre is *vaṃśamālā*, *kathitam* (U U –) cannot be used, while *samarpitam* (U–U–) fits. Biswas remarks: 'a totally obsolete use not known anywhere'.[22] However, by exploiting the two meanings of Tamil *aruḷ* 'to give; to speak', the poet could have used the word *samarpitam* (lit. 'handed over, given') as a synonym for *kathitam* to suit the metre.[23]

[19] See Sorensen p. 516b: Nārada cursed five Apsarases to be reborn as crocodiles in the five *tīrthas*.

[20] These features have been investigated by Biswas, 1968.

[21] Biswas does not investigate a possible Dravidian substratum.

[22] 1968, p. 217.

[23] A similar usage of synonymous verbs, e.g., *dā*, *pradā*, in the sense of 'reciting, thereby teaching and handing over' is common in Southern Sanskrit works. E.g., *Prapannâmṛta* 107, 52: *sarvam* (*siddhântam* in v. 50) *tasmai pradadau*; 107, 96: *mahyaṃ prabandhān pradadau*.

(ii) In BhP X, 31, 19 and 87, 18 we encounter the obscure word *kūrpa*. Śrīdhara *ad* 31, 19, paraphrases it as *sūkṣma-pāṣāṇa* 'sharp stones', and doubtlessly based on this, *ad* 87, 18 (where we find *kūrpa-dṛś*) *śārkarâkṣi* 'those who have eyes in which stones and dust are found'. While MW despairs and ventures only as much as 'whose eyes are formed in a particular manner', Biswas comments: 'The word is very rare and cannot be traced in known classical literature. ..Possibly *deśī*.'[24] Now we have two Tamil parallels to the song BhP X, 31: TVM X, 3, 7–10 and PâḻTM III, 2. BhP 31, 19 reads: 'our minds are worried on account of the *kūrpa*, etc. (that might hurt your feet), PâḻTM v.9 speaks of the forest in which Kṛṣṇa is walking as *kaṭiyaṉa ūṉṟu vem paraṟkaḷ uṭai* 'with hot [from the sun] pebbles that are sharp and hurt (your feet)'. This may give us the clue for the meaning of *kūrpa*, viz., 'something sharp'.[25] In Tamil, Kannarese, etc., we have the root *kūr-* (DED 1578) with derivatives like *kūrppu* (Ta) 'sharpness', *kūrpu* (Ka) 'sharpness; penetrating look' etc. Thus for BhP 31, 19 we could translate: 'sharp objects [like stones, etc.]', and for 86, 18, *contra* Śrīdhara, 'with sharp [=penetrating] sight', which fits the context better than 'ignorant [=because their sight is blocked by stones and dust]'.[26]

(iii) BhP X, 79, 14 mentions Kāmakoṣṇī. Śrīdhara does not comment on it, and MW, presumably because of the following Kāverī, says: 'N. of river'. However, immediately after Kāma is mentioned Kāñcī, in which we may see the Tamil Kacci, viz., the Varadarājā temple, in the *town* Kāñcīpuram. In the same town we have the famous Kāmâkṣī temple which in Tamil is known as Kāmakōṭṭi. This *°kōṭṭi* must be derived from Skt. *koṣṭha* 'store-room; treasury; enclosed area; inner appartment', from which we have in Tamil *kōṭṭam* also in the meaning 'temple'.[27] I would like to suggest that *°koṣṇī* is a false re-Sanskritization of this *°kōṭṭi*, parallel, for example, to Viṭṭu < Viṣṇu.[28]

[24] 1968, p. 239.

[25] Incidentally, Aṇṇa. paraphrases *kaṭiyaṉa* by *kūr-iyaṉa* (*ad loc*).

[26] Context itself forces Śrīdhara to suggest an alternative meaning: *sūkṣma* 'subtle'; the line reads: 'who of penetrating sight worship on the paths of the sages...'

[27] Thus the MTL, referring to *Cila.* 14, 10.

[28] As found in the Āḻvār's name Viṭṭucittaṉ.

(5) *The future saints of Tamilnadu*

We cannot avoid briefly discussing BhP XI, 5, 38–41a, which has frequently been discussed by previous authors. I begin with Veṅkaṭanātha's interpretation—an interesting piece of *avatāra* doctrine:

> As it has been said, 'Lord Acyuta enters during the *kaliyuga* into various beings who have already been born,[29] and accomplishes in them what he desires' *(Viṣṇudharmam* 108, 50*)*, he has once again 'incarnated himself' in ten ways by using the bodies of Nammāḻvār, Parakālaṉ, etc.[30] Just as the clouds gather the water from the ocean and then shower it down as rain upon all beings that thrive by it, he has summarized the most meaningful parts of the Vedas and expounded them in a language which is comprehensible to all [sic!] people [viz. in Tamil]. So that apparent or secret heretics *(pāṣaṇḍikaḷ)* could not obstruct the true path which he expounded thereby, in his grace he descended [again] into the country which Agastya frequents, in the disguise of many teachers *(ācāryas)*. ...This[31] in mind, the great *ṛṣi* (viz., Śuka) spoke: 'There will be in the *kali-yuga*. . (=BhP XI, 5, 38ff)'. Among *these* teachers, the son of Īśvaramuni, Nāthamuni,. . etc.[32]

Strictly speaking, Veṅkaṭanātha uses the quotation from the BhP as referring to the Ācāryas (*and* possibly the Āḻvārs, if the *com.* is correct), but not exclusively to the Āḻvārs. Thus Govindacharya's attempt to relate the rivers mentioned in the quotation to the birthplaces of the Āḻvārs and to see in the passage a prophecy of the Āḻvārs alone,[33] an attempt that has preoccupied many scholars since then, has no basis in Śrīvaiṣṇava tradition. As we shall see, taking the passage simply as a general reference to South India

[29] Not, as in the mythical *avatāras*, entering the womb of a mother and then born *as* Rāma, Kṛṣṇa, etc.

[30] 'Ten' is clearly by parallel to the classical ten *avatāras*. Though there were twelve Āḻvārs, Vedântadeśika can arrive at the figure ten by discarding Āṇṭāḷ (as *avatāra* of Bhūmi) and Madhurakavi (who as devotee of Nammāḻvār could hardly again be an *avatāra* of Viṣṇu). The remaining ten Āḻvārs are listed by Vedântadeśika in the first Tamil stanza of the RTS, p. 9.

[31] The comm. p. 38 explains 'this *(ittai)*' as 'that the Āḻvārs and Ācāryas were born and assisted the people'.

[32] The passage is RTS, pp. 34-9.

[33] In JRAS 1911, p. 949. This in turn was used, for example, by Das Gupta, vol. III, p. 63; Farquhar, 1920, p. 232; Filliozat 1962, pp. 71-74 (on this see below). From Das Gupta, Gail (1969, p. 13) infers that the passage 'enthält einen *deutlichen* Hinweis auf die Āḻvārs' (my italics).

as the country hallowed by Āḻvārs, Ācāryas, and other *bhaktas* appears to be the most appropriate interpretation. The verses read:

The people [living] in the *kṛta* etc. *(yugas)* desire a [new] birth in the *kali-yuga*, for in the *kali* age they[34] will indeed become devotees of Nārāyaṇa. (38) [This is because] in different places, but particularly among the Draviḍas, where there are the rivers Tāmraparṇī, Kṛtamālā, Payasvinī, (39), the highly auspicious Kāverī, and the Mahānadī flowing to the West,[35] men[36] who drink their water (40) will inevitably become *bhaktas* of pure hearts, of Bhagavān Vāsudeva. (41a)[37]

The verses are part of a discourse which Karabhajana gave to King Nimi (5, 20–43), in reply to the latter's question:

Please tell me now in which ages, in which *varṇas*, by which people, under which names, and according to which rules Bhagavān is worshipped by people. (19)[38]

The whole of Karabhajana's discourse leads up to an exuberant praise of the *kali-yuga:*

Noble persons who can judge quality and relish the essential, praise the *kaliyuga* in which all desired objects can be obtained simply by the *saṅkīrtana*. (36)

Although using a different classification (the age of bhakti is the new *kṛta-yuga*), TVM V, 2 shows the same exuberance: 'The subjects of Kṛṣṇa increase in numbers, spread over the earth, and

[34] According to the *Cūrṇikā* 'all people', a rather exaggerated gloss.

[35] I believe this to be the best rendering of *prātīcī ca mahānadī*. MW takes *Prātīcī* as 'N. of river', also the *Cūrṇikā* which then takes *mahānadī* as attribute for all rivers mentioned. Filliozat speaks correctly of 'la Mahānadī occidentale'. See below.

[36] Śrīdhara has the pedantic and superfluous gloss 'those who live on the various banks of the respective (rivers)'.

[37] *... kalau khalu bhaviṣyanti Nārāyaṇa-parāyaṇāḥ* //38b//
kvacit kvacin, mahā-rāja! Draviḍeṣu ca bhūriśaḥ /
Tāmraparṇī nadī yatra Kṛtamālā Payasvinī //39//
Kāverī ca mahā-puṇyā prātīcī ca Mahānadī /
ye pibanti jalaṃ tāsāṃ manujā, manujêśvara! //40//
prāyo bhaktā Bhagavati Vāsudeve 'malâśayāḥ /41a/

[38] On Viṣṇu's different colours during the four yugas see Gros 1968, pp. 182f. It is common to relate different forms of worship to the various ages (Vedic for *kṛta* etc.), but contrary to our present passage, this usually is meant as an apology. by reference to the decadence of the age, for bhakti or Tantrism during the *kali* age.

singing to music dance and whirl about in frenzy'—in other words, perform *saṅkīrtana*.

Nammāḻvār, Karabhajana, and Vedântadeśika obviously speak about the same basic phenomenon: the outburst of emotional Kṛṣṇa bhakti in the South. But can the purāṇic passage be interpreted as reference to the Āḻvārs? Naturally, the five rivers mentioned belong to what I have styled Āḻvār country.[39] But Filliozat's attempt[40] to connect the rivers with the birthplaces of the Āḻvārs is not convincing; moreover, his arguments follow rather strange lines.[41] He concludes his discussion:

> Les promoteurs de la bhakti vishnouite au pays Draviḍa où coulent ces rivières sont bien les Āḻvār, *c'est donc bien* en songeant à eux que le passage du Bhāgavata qui fait allusion aux bhakta de ce pays a été composé, *après l'époque de leur floraison à tous*, c'est à dire après le Xe siècle.[42]

We may comment: *non sequitur*. The rivers can be identified as follows: Tāmraparṇī=Porunal, passing through Kurukūr, in the Tirunelvely District;[43] Kṛtamālā = Vaikai, flowing through Maturai;[44] Payasvinī=Pāḻāṟu (literally 'milk-river'), near Kāñcīpuram in the Chingleput District;[45] Mahānadī=Pēṟāṟu or Periyâṟu (lit. 'great river', called 'western' to differentiate it from the Mahānadī in Orissa) in Southern Kerala;[46] the Kāverī is the well-known river passing through Śrīraṅgam. The sanctity of these rivers does not depend on the Āḻvārs, but on the many Viṣṇu temples on their banks, about which the Āḻvārs have in turn written their hymns. Thus we may conclude: the passage cannot be used as reference to the Āḻvārs, and in turn for a discussion of the date of the *Purāṇa*, in any but the most general sense.

[39] See 4.22 and Maps 1 and 2.

[40] 1962, pp. 71-4.

[41] He creates a pseudo-problem by saying that 'le Vaiyai est ordinairement nommé Vegavatī en sanskrit' (p. 73); Vegavatī is as commonly used for a river in Kāñcī: see Vedântadeśika's *Vegasetustotra* and *Meyviratamāṉmiyam*, and Gros, p. xxxi, note 1. Secondly, he actually quotes from the *Rahasyatrayasāra*, and yet claims: 'Vedântadeśika n'invoque donc pas directement le *Bhāgavata*' (p. 72). Only a few paragraphs below, the passage translated above is found. Thirdly, he simply states about the Periyâṟu 'c'est là la rivière du pays de Kulaśekhara Āḻvār'. On a more likely region for this Āḻvār see my discussion above, 4.22, with note 10.

[42] 1962, p. 74 (my italics).

[43] See above note 8.

[44] See the texts quoted by Gros, 1968, pp. xxxf.

[45] Thus also the MTL.

[46] The MTL refers to *Cila*. 25, 180.

APPENDIX XII Parallel passages in the BhP and the *Prabandham*

1) *nāmum nam pāvaikku ceyyuṅ kiricaikaḷ*	*– TPā 2ab*	*Kātyāyany-arcana-vrataṃ cerur -* *– BhP X, 22, 1b*
2) *nāṅkaḷ nam pāvaikku ccārri nīr āṭiṉāl*	*– ibid. 3b*	*mantraṃ japantyas ibid.4c*
3)		*kṛtvā pratikṛtiṃ devīm ...* *saikatīm – BhP X, 22, 2b* *tau tasmin puline Devyāḥ kṛtvā mūrtiṃ mahī-mayīm /* *arhaṇāṃ cakratus tasyāḥ puṣpa-dhūpâgni-tarpaṇaiḥ //* *nirāharau yatâhārau tan-manaskau samāhitau /* *dadatus tau balim ... //* *Mārkaṇḍeya-Purāṇa, 93, 10f.*

In *Akan.* 269, 19 we hear of *vaṇṭar pāvai* 'dolls made of sand', and of girls playing with them during the month of *tai*.
In NTM, II, 3 we hear: *vaṇṭal nuṇ maṇal teḷḷi* '(we) sifted the fine sand brought ashore by the waves'. But it is impossible to decide whether the BhP simply tries to explain what 'pāvai' in the *caṅkam* context meant, or whether it derived the inspiration specifically from NTM II which depicts *gopīs* playing in the sand of the beach and making various objects with it.

4) *pār cōru mūṭa ney peytu muḷ- aṅkai vaḷi vāra*	*ibi. 27fg*	*haviṣyam bhuñjānāḥ – ibi. 1b* *(acc. to MW hav° consists of rice, clarified butter, etc.)*
5) *tū malarkaḷ tūy*	*TPā 5e*	*mālyaiḥ – ibi. 3a → mālya° 53, 47a.*
6) *(amparamē taṇṇīrē) cōrē*	TPā 17a.	*taṇḍulaiḥ – ibi. 3b* *→adbhir . . . vāsaḥ – 53, 47a* *balibhiḥ – 3a → balibhiḥ 53, 47b* *compare ikṣu 'sugar-cane' 53, 48 with NTM I, 7: karumpu.*
7) *kōla viḷakkē*	*– TPā 26g*	*dīpakaiḥ – 3a→pradīpâvalibhiḥ – 53, 47b*

compare: TPā 26 *caṅkaṅkaḷ ... perum paṟaiyē pallāṇṭ' icaippārē* 'conchs, big drums, singers of praise-songs' with 53, 42a.43a: *mṛdaṅga-śaṅkha-. .*, *gāyantaś ca stuvantaś ca gāyakā vādya-vādakāḥ.*

8) *paraman̲ aṭi pāṭi* *TPā 2* *Kṛṣṇam uccair jagur BhP X, 22.6*
uttaman̲ pēr pāṭi *TPā 3*
mukil vaṇṇan̲ pēr pāṭa *TPā 11*
9) *man̲attin̲ār̲ cintikka* *TPā 5* *Kṛṣṇa-cetasaḥ ibid. 5 → X 53,40: sā cânudhyāyatī samyaṅ Mukunda-caraṇâmbujam*
10) *āyar cir̲umiyarōmukku ar̲ai par̲ai Māyan̲ … nen̲n̲alē vāy nērntān̲* *TPā 16* *mayêmā raṃsyatha kṣapāḥ yad uddiśya vratam idaṃ cerur Āryârcanaṃ satīḥ ibid. 27*
11) *un̲akkē nām āṭ ceyvōm, mar̲r̲ai naṅ kāmaṅkaḷ mār̲r̲u TPā 29*
12) *te dāsyaḥ karavāma tavôditam .. bhavatyo yadi me dāsyo 15f*
13) *sva-pāda-sparśa-kāmyayā .. na mayy āveśita-dhiyāṃ kāmaḥ kāmāya kalpate ibid. 24f.*
14) *veḷvaraippatan̲ mun̲n̲an tur̲ai paṭintu NTM I, 2* *āplutyâmbhasi .. udite 'ruṇe 2*
15) *maṇi vaṇṇar̲k' en̲n̲ai vakutt' iṭu ibid. 10* *Nanda-gopa-sutam .. patiṃ me kuru 4, cp. 5 and 53, 46*
16) *mantirattāl .. un̲n̲ai vaṇaṅ-kukin̲rēn̲ 7* *iti mantraṃ japantyas tāḥ pūjāṃ cakrur 4*
17) *tukilai ppaṇitt' aruḷāyē NTM III, 1* *dehi vāsāṃsi 14 and 15*
kūr̲ai paṇiyāy 2.4.5.8
paṭṭai ppaṇitt' aruḷāyē 3.6
kūr̲ai tārāy 9
18) *nītiy allātan̲a ceytāy 7* *mânayam .. kṛthās 14*
19) *nīrilē nin̲r̲' ayarkin̲r̲ōm 7* *vepitāḥ 14 tato jalâśayāt .. śīta-vepitāḥ 17*
20) *aṅṅan̲un tīmaikaḷ ceyvarkaḷō, nampi! āyar maṭa makkaḷai? paṅkaya nīr kuṭaint' āṭukin̲rārkaḷ pin̲n̲ē cen̲r̲' oḷitt' iruntu aṅk' avar pūn tukil vāri kkoṇṭ' iṭṭu arav' ēr iṭaiyār irappa "maṅkai nallīr! vantu koṇmin̲" en̲ru maram ēr̲iy iruntāy pōlum PTM X, 7, 11.*
vijahruḥ salile mudā (7) Bhagavāṃs tad abhipretya Kṛṣṇo .. āgatas tatra .. (8) tāsāṃ vāsāṃsy upādāya nīpam āruhya satvaraḥ .. uvāca ha (9) "atrâgatyâbalāḥ .. svaṃ vāsaḥ pragṛhyatām" (10)

21) *eṇ ṭicaiyōrum ir̲aiñci ttol̲ut' ētta vaṇṭ' amar pūṅ kul̲alār tukil kai kkoṇṭu viṇ ṭōy marattān̲āl .. vēṇṭavum tārān̲āl PâlTM II, 10, 2* *badhvâñjaliṃ mūrdhny . . . kṛtvā namo 'dho … 19 nemur 20*
22) *kim ācarad ayaṃ kuśalaṃ sma* ˙ *Matucūtan̲ vāy amutam pan̲ n̲āḷum*

veṇur Dāmodarâdhara-sudhām api gopikānāṃ bhuṅkte svayam BhP X, 21, 9

uṇkiṉrāy Pāñcacaṉṉiyamē! NTM VII 5
peṇ paṭaiyār uṉ mēl perum pūcal cārrukiṉrār paṇp' ala ceykiṉrāy 8 potuv ākav uṇpataṉai nī^{y} uṇṭak-kāl 9.

23) *khura-rajaś-churita-srak BhP X, 35, 23 comp. 15, 42: go-rajaś-churita-kuntala°, and 31, 12: ghana-rajasvalam*

karṟu ttūḷi uṉṉ uṭampu PâḷTM III, 3, 3; karṟû ttūḷiy uṭai ibid. 2, 2.

24) *vāma-bāhu-kṛta-vāma-kapolo valgita-bhrur adharârpita-veṇuṃ komalâṅgulibhir āśrita-mārgam .. īrayati yatra Mukundaḥ BhP X, 35, 2*

iṭaiv aṇaraiy iṭa ttōḷoṭu cāytt' iru kai kūṭa ppuruvam nerint' ēṟa .. vāy kaṭai kūṭa kKovintaṉ kuḷal koṭ' ūtiṉa pōtu PâḷTM III, 6, 2

25) *maṅkaimārkaḷ malar kkūntal aviḷa uṭai nekiḷav ōr kaiyāl tukil parriy olki PâḷTM III, 6, 2.*

°vanitāḥ .. kaśma-laṃ yayur apasmṛta--nīvyaḥ BhP X 35, 3.

devyo .. bhraśyat-prasūna-kabarā mu-muhur vinīvyaḥ BhP X, 21, 12

26) *kuḷal ōcai vaḷiyē maruṇṭu māṉ kaṇ-aṅkaḷ mēykai maṟ-antu meynta pulluṅ kaṭai vāy vaḷi cōra .. eḷutu cittiraṅkaḷ pōla niṉraṇavē PâḷTM III, 6, 9*

vṛndaśo .. mṛga-gā-vo veṇu-vādya-hṛta-cetasa .. danta-daṣṭa-kavalā .. li-khita-citram ivâsan BhP X, 35, 5

dhanyāḥ .. hariṇya etā .. ākarṇya veṇu-raṇitam BhP X, 21, 11

27)

PâḷTM III, 6:	8	10	8	7	1f	3–6	(cows, trees, birds,
BhP X, 35:	5	9	12	15	17	21	gods, girls, semigods)
BhP X, 21:	13	—	14	—	—	—	

28) *bhavat-kiṅkarīḥ sma no ja-laruhânananaṃ cāru darśaya BhP X, 31, 6*

vaci cey uṉ tāmarai kkaṇṇum vāyum .. kāṭṭi TVM X, 3, 8

29) *vidhi-karīr imā .. adhara--sīdhunâpy āyayasva naḥ ibid. 8 vitara .. nas te 'dharâmṛtam ibid. 14*

uṉ vāy amutan tantu .. aṭicciyōm TVM X, 3, 5

30) *te padaṃ śila-tṛṇâṅkuraiḥ sī-datîti naḥ kalilatāṃ manaḥ ..*

uṉ ceṅ kamala vaṇṇa meṉ malar aṭi nōva nī pōy TVM X, 3, 7

gacchati ibid. 11
te° caraṇâmburuham . . tenâṭavīm aṭasi; tad vyathate na kiṃsvit kūrpâdibhir bhramati dhīr . . naḥ ibid. 19

31) *aṭati yad bhavān ahni kānanaṃ truṭir yugāyate tvām apaśyatām ibid. 15*

32) *prema-vīkṣitam . . no manaḥ kṣobhayanti ibid. 10*

33) *viṣa-jalâpyaya varṣa-māruta vṛṣa, Māyâtmaja* } *ibid. 3*

34) *tava pāda-talam . . asprākṣma; tat-prabhṛti nânya-samakṣaṃ sthātum . . pārayāmaḥ BhP X, 29, 36*

35) *te 'ṅghri-mūla-prāptā visṛjya vasatīs tvad-upāsanâśāḥ, dehi dāsyam ibid. 38.*

36) *tan no vidhehi kara-paṅkajam . . tapta-staneṣu ca śiraḥsu ca kiṅkarīṇām ibid. 41; comp. X, 47, 21: bhujam . . mūrdhny adhāsyat kadā nu?*

37) *kiṃ te . . kṣiti . . Keśavâṅghri-sparśôtsavôtpulakita° apy aṅghri-sambhava Urukramavikramād vā . . Varāha-vapuṣaḥ parirambhaṇena BhP X, 30, 10*

38) *tulasi! . . saha tvâli-kulair bibhrad BhP X, 30, 7*

see also PâlTM III, 2, 1.8 aṭi nōva uṭaiyuṅ kaṭiyaṉa ūṉru vem pararkaḷ uṭai kaṭiya veṅ kāṉ iṭai kkāl aṭi nōva PâlTM III, 2, 9
kaṭiya veṅ kāṉ iṭai . . ceṅ kamalav aṭiyum vetumpi ibid. 3,4
ā . . nirai mēykka nī pōkku oru pakal āyiram ūliy ālō! TVM X, 3, 1
kaṇṇum vāyum pāviyēṉ maṉattē niṉr' īrum TVM IX, 9, 3
nañc' umiḷ nāka PâlTM III, 3, 6 (Govardhana) 8
kaṉriṉ uruv āki . . kaḷḷav asurar 7
uttamark' enru . . eluntav en taṭa mulaikaḷ māṉiṭavarkk' enru peccu ppaṭil NTM I, 5
avarai ppirāyan toṭaṅkiy enrum ātaritt' eluntaᵛ en taṭa mulaikaḷ . . pirāṉukkē caṅkarpittu ibid. 4
cirranciru kālē vant' unnai ccēvittu uṉ . . aṭiyē pōrrum poruḷ kēḷāy: . . nī kurrēval eṅkaḷai kkoḷāmar pōkātu TPā 29
tiru kkaikaḷāl ennai ttīṇṭum vaṇṇam . . meṉ taṭa mulaiyum NTM I, 7
koṅkai tannai . . aḷḷi . . enn alalai ttīrvēṉē NTM XIII, 8
mullai ppōtu eṉ . . mulai kamalvittu . . aṇi . . tāmarai kkaiyai . . aṭicciyōn talai micai nī aṇiyāy TVM X, 3, 5
ñālam āvēṉum yāṉē . . ñālam koṇṭēṉum yāṉē . . ñālam kīṇṭēṉum yāṉē TVM V, 6, 1 niṉ . . eyirrāl iṭantu nī koṇṭa nila makaḷ kēḷvaṉē TVM VII, 2, 9
vaṇṭ' iṉaṅkāḷ! . . Pirāṉ cūṭiya taṇ ṭuḷavam uṇṭa . . vāykaḷ TVM

tulasikâli-kulair .. anvīyamāna ibid. 12.

VI, 8, 3 Comp. PTM VIII, 4, where a tumpi is requested to go and suck the tulsī which adorns Kṛṣṇa.

39) *sakṛd adhara-sudhāṃ svāṃ .. pāyayitvā sumanasa iva sadyas tatyaje 'smān bhavādṛk BhP X, 47, 13*

teyva vaṇṭu tutainta em peṇmaiy am pūv it' ālō! TVM IX, 9, 4

40) *kim iha bahu .. gāyasi tvam; °sakhīnāṃ gīyatām 14*

tōkai mā mayilārkaḷ ninn aruḷ cūṭuvār ceviy ōcai vaitt' eḷa .. kuḷal ūtu, pōy TVM VI, 2, 2 ennukk' avaḷai viṭṭ' iṅku vantāy, innam aṅkē naṭa! PāḷTM VI, 5

41) *striyam akṛta virūpāṃ strī-jitaḥ kāmayānām 17*

arakkar kula ppāvai .. Cūrp-paṇakā ccōrv' eyti .. eḷunta kāmattāl tannai nayantāḷai tāṉ muṉintu mūkk' arintu PTMaṭ 75

42) *vayam ṛtam iva jihma-vyāhṛ-taṃ śraddadhānāḥ .. dadṛśur asa-kṛd .. bhaṇyatām anya-vārtā 19*

ācai y inmai aṟint' aṟintē y un ṟaṉ poyyai kkēṭṭu PāḷTM VI, 1 puḷḷuvam pēcātē pōku ibid. 7

43) *varaya kim anurundhe 20*

44) *nayasi katham ihâsmān dus-tyaja-dvandva-pārśvaṃ, satatam urasi .. Śrīr vadhūḥ sākam āste, api .. kvacid api sa kathā naḥ gṛṇīte? 20.21*

avaḷum ninn ākatt' iruppatum aṟintum ākilum ācai viṭāḷāl. collu .. ivaḷai eṉ niṉaitt' iruntāy PTM II, 7, 1

45) *kurari! vilapasi tvaṃ vīta-nidrā na śeṣe; svapati jagati rā-tryām īśvaro gupta-bodhaḥ, vayam iva, sakhi!, kaccid gāḍha-nirbhinna-cetā .. līlêkṣitena? BhP X, 90, 15*

nārāy! āyum amar ulakum tuñ-cilum nī tuñcāyāl; .. emmē pōl nīyum Tirumālāl neñcaṅ kōṭ paṭ-ṭāyē? TVM II, 1, 1

uṟaṅkuvāṉ pōl yōku ceyta Peru-mānai TVM V, 4, 11

kātal nōy neñcam .. aṭumāl, .. irāv uḷi mūṭiṟṟ'āl TVM V, 4, 6

46) *netre na mīlayasi naktam adṛṣṭa-bandhus tvaṃ roravīṣi kar-uṇaṃ, bata cakravāki! dāsyaṃ gatā vayam iva pāda-juṣṭāṃ kiṃ vā srajaṃ spṛhayase kabareṇa voḍhum ibid. 16*

kōṭ paṭṭa cintaiyaiy āy .. anṟilē! cēṭ paṭṭa yāmaṅkaḷ cērāt' iraṅ-kuti āṭ paṭṭav emmē pōl nīyum .. tāṭ paṭṭa taṇ ṭuḷāy ttāmam kām' uṟṟāyē? TVM II, 1, 2

47) *bho! bho! sadā niṣṭanase udanvann! alabdha-nidro .. kiṃ vā Mukundâpahṛtâtma-lāñchanaḥ prāptāṃ daśāṃ tvaṃ ca gato duratyayām? ibid. 17*

kām' urra kai aravōṭu .. irā ppakal nī murra kkaṇ tuyilāy, neñc' urukiy ēṅkutiyāl; .. yām urrat' urrāyō? .. kaṭalē! TVM II, 1, 3

48) *tvaṃ yakṣmaṇā balavatâsi gṛhīta. indo! kṣīṇas tamo na nijadīdhitibhiḥ kṣiṇoṣi 18*

naiv' āya .. nāḷ matiyē! nīy innāḷ mai vān iruḷ akarrāy ibid. 6

49) *tvayôpabhukta-srag-gandha--vāso-' laṅkāra-carcitāḥ ucchiṣṭabhojino dāsās tava BhP XI, 6, 46*

uṭuttu kkaḷainta nin pīta vāṭaiy uṭuttu kkalattat' uṇṭu, tulāy malar cūṭi kkaḷaintana cūṭum ittoṇṭarkaḷōm PâlTM I, 1, 9

50) *pratīkṣate tvām .. bhokṣyamāṇo Vrajâdhipaḥ BhP X, 11, 17.*

appanum uṇṭ' ilan unnōṭ' uṭanēy unpān PâlTM III, 3, 3.

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8.1 *Abbreviations used in the following pages*

ASG	*Anandâśrama-Saṃskṛta-granthâvali,* Poona
AWL	Akademie der Wissenschaften und der Literatur, Abhandlungen der Geistes- und Sozialwissenschaftlichen Klasse, Mainz-Wiesbaden
BiSR	Beiträge zur indischen Sprachwissenschaft und Religionsgeschichte, Stuttgart
Brown	*Indological Studies in Honour of W.N. Brown,* American Oriental Series, vol. 47, New Haven, 1962
BSOS	*Bulletin of the School of Oriental Studies*, London
GiPA	*Grundriß der into-arischen Philologie und Altertumskunde,* Strassbourg, then Berlin-Leipzig
HO	*Handbuch der Orientalistik*, ed. B. Spuler etc., II: *Indien*, Leiden
HOS	Harvard Oriental Series
IA	*Indian Antiquary*, Bombay
JAOS	*Journal of the American Oriental Society*, New Haven
JRAS	*Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society* (of Great Britain and Ireland), London
JRASBom	*Journal of the Bombay Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society*
KPBA	Kāñcīpuram Prativādī-bhayaṅkara Aṇṇaṅkarācāriyar, publications by his Granthamālā Office, Kāñcīpuram
Leshnik	*Pastoralists and Nomads in South Asia*, ed. L. S. Leshnik and G.-D. Sontheimer (=Schriftenreihe des Südasien-Instituts der Universität Heidelberg), Wiesbaden, 1975
MUHS	Madras University Historical Series
NIA	*New Indian Antiquary*, Bombay
PIFI	Publications de l'Institut Français d'Indologie, Pondicherry
PTS	Prakrit Text Society Series, Ahmedabad
Renou	*Mélanges d'Indianisme à la mémoire de L. Renou,* Paris, 1968
SBE	*Sacred Books of the East*, ed. F.M. Müller, Oxford
Singer	*Kṛṣṇa: Myths, Rites, and Attitudes*, ed. M. Singer, Chicago, 1966, reprint 1968
SJS	Singhi Jain Series, Bombay
ŚSPS	South India Śaiva-Siddhānta Works Publishing Society, Tinnevelly/Madras (Tirunelvēli ttenn Intiya Caivacittānta nūṟ patippu kkaḻakam, Tirunelvēli/Cennai)
TSS	Trivandrum Sanskrit Series
WZKSA	Wiener Zeitschrift für die Kunde Süd- und Ostasiens, und Archiv für indische Philosophie, Vienna
ZDMG	Zeitschrift der deutschen morgenländischen Gesellschaft

8.2 *Original sources in Sanskrit, Prakrit, and Apabhraṃśa*

All works are listed by their titles (not authors), following the order of the Sanskrit alphabet.

\+ indicates that the work is in Prakrit.
o indicates that the work is in Apabhraṃśa
– before works of Bhāsa and Kālidāsa indicates that the editions by Devadhar 1937 and 1966 have been used
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– *Abhiṣeka-nāṭaka* of Bhāsa

= *Aṣṭabhujâṣṭakam*

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o *Mahāpurāṇa* of Puṣpadanta (1) see Alsodrf, 1936, (2) ed. P.L. Vaidya, 3 vols., *Manikchand Digambara-Jaina-granthamālā*; vol. 1 = no. 37, Bombay 1937, vol. 3 = no. 42, Bombay, 1941
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Mahābhārata (crit. ed.), Poona, Bhandarkar Oriental Research Institute
II *Sabhāparvan* (=vol. 2), ed. F. Edgerton, 1944
IV *Virāṭaparvan* (=vol. 5), ed. Raghu Vira 1936
VI *Bhīṣmaparvan* (=vol. 7), ed. S.K. Belvalkar, 1947 **MBh**
Compare Sørensen, 1904
Mahābhāṣya (Vyākaraṇa-) of Patañjali (1) ed. F. Kielhorn, vol. II, Bombay, 1883; 2nd rev. ed., Bombay, 1906 (2) ed. Bh. Joshī, vol. IV, Bombay, 1942
Mahāvastu ed. É. Senart, 3 vols., Paris, 1882-97
– *Mālavikâgnimitra* of Kālidāsa
Mṛcchakaṭika of Śūdraka, ed. with various commentaries by Nārāyaṇa Bālakṛṣṇa Godbole, Bombay, 1896
Meghadūta of Kālidāsa, ed. and trans. F. and E. Edgerton, *The Cloud Messenger*, University of Michigan, 1964
Yaśastilaka of Somadeva, ed. P. Śivadatta and K. Pandurang Parab, 2 vols., *Kāvyamālā*, no. 70, Bombay, 1901 and 1903
Yādavâbhyudaya of Veṅkaṭanātha, ed. with Appayya Dīkṣitar's commentary, his own Skt. commentary and Tamil translation, by U. Vīrarāghavâcarya, Madras, 1969
Raghuvaṃśa of Kālidāsa, ed. by Pandits of the Sanskrit College, Calcutta, 1832
Lalitavistara ed. S. Lefmann, vol. 1 (text) Halle 1902, vol. 2 (indices, etc.) Halle, 1908
Locana see *Dhvanyāloka*
+ *Vajjālaggam* of Jayavallabha, ed. M. V. Patwardhan, PTS, vol. 14, 1969
– *Vikramôrvasīya* of Kālidāsa
Viṣṇu-Purāṇa (1) ed. J.V. Bhaṭṭâcārya, with Śrīdhara's commentary *Svaprakāśa*, Calcutta, 1882 (2) ed. Kṛṣṇaśāstrī Pitre, Bombay, 1887 (3) Gorakhpur edition, with Hindī translation (Gita Press), 3rd ed., 1952 **ViP**
o + *Vṛttajātisamuccaya* of Virahaṅka, ed. H.D. Velankar, *JRASBom*, vol. 5, 1929, pp. 34-94
= *Vegāsetustotra*
Veṇisaṃhāra of Bhaṭṭa-Nārāyaṇa, ed. and French trans. F. Bourgeois, (=Publications de l'Institut de Civilisation indienne, fasc. 33), Paris, 1971

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Śiśupālavadha of Māgha, ed. P. Durgaprasāda, Bombay, 12th ed., 1957
\+ *Sattasaī* of Hāla see Weber, 1870 and 1881
Saduktikarṇâmṛta of Śrīdharadāsa, ed. S.C. Banerji, Calcutta, 1965
Saddharmapuṇḍarīka : *The Lotus of the True Law*, trans. H. Kern, *SBE*, vol. 21, Oxford, 1884
o *Sandeśa-rāsaka* of Abdul Rahmān, ed. Jina Vijaya Muni and Harivallabh Bhayani, SJS, vol. 22, 1945
\+ *Siddhihemacandram* of Hemacandra, *Hemacandra's Grammatik der Prakritsprachen* (=chapter VIII), ed. and trans. R. Pischel, vol. 1 (text) Halle, 1877, vol. 2 (trans.) Halle, 1880
Subhāṣitaratnakoṣa of Vidyākara, ed. D. Kosambi and V. Gokhale, HOS, vol. 42, 1957 Compare Ingalls, 1965
= *Stotramālā* of Veṅkaṭanātha (1) only text, published by the Vaikuṇṭhanātha Devasthāna, Calcutta, 1969 (2) ed. Va. Na. Śrīrāmadeśikâcāryar with a Tamil commentary and trans., 2 vols., Kumbakonam, 1970
Stotraratnam of Yāmunâcarya, ed. with Veṅkaṭanātha's commentary by C.V. Śrīvatsâṅkâcārya, Madras, n.d. (c. 1968)
o *Svayambhūchandas* of Svayambhū, ed. H. D. Velankar, 'Apabhramśa Metres II', in *Journal of the University of Bombay*, vol. 5, 1936, part III, pp. 41-93
Harivaṃśa (crit. ed.), ed. P.L. Vaidya, vol. 1 (text), 1969 (see *Mahābhārata*, crit. ed); Nīlakaṇṭha Caturdhara's commentary: Shriman-Mahabharatam, part 7: Harivamshaparvan, Poona, 1936 **Hv**
Hāsyârṇava-prahasana of Jagadīśvara Bhaṭṭâcārya, ed. with Hindī translation, Benares (Chowkhambha Sanskrit Series), n.d.

8.3 *Original sources in Tamil and Maṇipravāḷa*

All works are listed by their titles (not authors), following the order of the Tamil alphabet (g after k, bh after p).
For abbreviations of *caṅkam* works see Table V, p. 125 *supra*.
\+ indicates that the work is in Maṇipravāḷa
o indicates that the work is part of the *Pattuppāṭṭu*, *qv*
= indicates a work belonging to the Śaivite *Tirumuṟai*
: indicates commentaries printed in the *Pakavatviṣayam*,
indicates a work belonging to the *Prabandham* (see Table XII); only works for which commentaries other than those mentioned under *Nālāyira°* have been used are listed here

Akanāṉūṟu ed. with *Patavurai* etc. Po. Vē. Cōmacuntaraṉ, ŚSPS, 2 vols., 1970
= *Aṟputatiruvantâti* of Kāraikkāl Ammaiyār, see Kârâvêlane, 1956
\+ *Acāryahṛdayam* of Aḻakiya Maṇavāḷa pPerumāḷ Nāyaṉār, with the commentary of Maṇavāḷa Mā muṉi, in *Śrīmad-Varavara-munîndra-granthamālā*, vol. 1, 1966 (KPBA), Tamil characters
: *Āṟāyirappaṭi* (=6000) of Tirukkurukai pPirāṉ Piḷḷāṉ (The same 6000 also for the commentary on the TPā, and for the GPPT)

: *Irupattiṉālāyirappaṭi* (=24000) of Periyavāccāṉ Piḷḷai
: *Īṭu*, or *Muppattārāyirappaṭi* (=36000) of Vaṭakku Tiruvīti pPiḷḷai, with Jīyar's *Arumpatavurai*
Upatēcarattiṉamālai of Maṇavāḷa Mā muṉi, 1970 (KPBA)
Aiṅkuṟunīṟu ed. with comm. Po. Vē. Cōmacuntaraṉ, ŚSPS, 1st ed., 1961, reprinted 1966
: *Oṉpatiṉāyirappaṭi* of Nañjīyar
Kalittokai ed. with the comm. of Naccinārkkiniyar and a *viḷakkam* by Po. Vē. Cōmacūntaraṉ, ŚSPS, 1st ed., 1969, reprinted 1970
o *Kuṟiñcippāṭṭu*
Kuṟuntokai ed. U. Vē. Cāmināṭaiyar, Pāri Nilaiyam, Ceṉṉai (=Madras), 1st ed., 1937, 4th ed., 1962. Compare Ramanujan, 1970
+ *Guruparamparāprabhāvam*, Teṉkaḷai (=6000), of Piṉp' Aḻakiya Perumāḷ Jīyar, ed. S. Kiruṣṇasvāmi Ayyaṅkār, *Śrīsūktimālā veḷiyīṭukaḷ* no. 23, Tirucci, 1968, Tamil characters **GPPT**
+ *Guruparamparāprabhāvam*, Vaṭakaḷai (=3000), of the 3rd Brahmatantra-svatantra-svāmī, ed. Kīḻāttūr Śrīnivāsāccāriyar, *Ti liṭṭil pḷavar kampeṉi* (=The Little Flower Co.), Ceṉṉai, 1968, Tamil characters **GPPV**
Caṅka-Ilakkiyam ed. S. Vaiyāpuri pPiḷḷai, 2 vols., Pāri Nilaiyam, Ceṉṉai, 1st ed., 1940, 2nd ed., 1967
Cilappatikāram (1) ed. Cāmināṭaiyar, Madras, 1920, (2) ed. with various commentaries by Na. Mu. Vēkaṭacāmi Nāṭṭār, ŚSPS, 1st ed., 1942, 8th ed. 1968
o *Ciṟuppāṇāṟṟuppaṭai*
Tirukkuṟaḷ e.g., G.U. Pope, *The 'sacred' Kurraḷ of Tiruvaḷḷuva-Nāyanār*, ed. and trans., London, 1866
= *Tirukkōvaiyār* of Māṇikkavācakar, ed. with ancient commentaries and a modern *viḷakkam*, by Po. Vē. Cōmacuntaraṉ, ŚSPS, 1st ed., 1970 **TKō**
– *Tiruppāvai* of Āṇṭāḷ, ed. with Periyavāccāṉ's commentary *Mūvāyirappaṭi* (=3000) and Aḻakiya Maṇavāḷa pPerumāḷ Nāyaṉār's *Āṟāyirappaṭi* (=6000), KPBA, 1970 Compare Filliozat, 1972
o = *Tirumurukāṟṟuppaṭai*
Tirumuṟai: only the works marked = are listed here.
= *Tiruvācakam* of Māṇikkavācakar, G.U. Pope, *The Tiruvāçagam or 'Sacred Utterances' of the Tamil poet, saint, and sage Māṇikkavāçagar*, ed. and trans. Oxford, 1900 **TVāc**
– *Tiruvāymoḻi* of Nammāḻvār, ed. with various commentaries in *Pakavat-viṣayam, qv*
: *Tiruvāymoḻi-nūṟṟantâti* of Maṇavāḷa Mā muṉi; also published by KPBA, 1970 **TVMNū**
– *Tiruviruttam* of Nammāḻvār, compare Hooper, 1929, pp. 61-88
= *Tiruvempāvai* of Māṇikkavācakar, see Pope, 1900, pp. 103-16
Tolkāppiyam (text only) ed. Ti. Cu. Pālacuntaram Piḷḷai, ŚSPS, 1st ed., 1943, 3rd ed., 1967
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Nālaṭiyār ed. C. Pālacuntaram Piḷḷai, ŚSPS, 1964

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o *Neṭunalvāṭai*

+ *Pakavatviṣayam* ed. Vai. Mu. Kōpālakiruṣṇamācāriyar, A. Vī. Narasimmācāriyar, 10 vols, Tiruvallikkēṇi, 1925-30 (Grantha characters). Contains 6000, 9000, 12000, 24000, *Iṭu* with *Arumpatavurai*, TVMNū, etc.

o *Paṭṭiṉapālai*

o *Pattuppāṭṭu* ed. in 2 vols. with commentaries by Po. Vē. Cōmacuntaraṉ, ŚSPS, 1st ed. 1956, 2nd ed., 1962. Compare Chelliah 1962 (which contains the text and a rather weird poetic translation)

Paripāṭal (1) ed. with commentaries by Po. Vē. Cōmacuntaraṉ, ŚSPS, 1st ed., 1957, 3rd ed., 1969 (2) ed. with French translation and notes by F. Gros, PIFI, vol. 35, 1968

: *Paṉṉīrāyirappaṭi* (=12000) of Aḷakiya Maṇavāḷa cCīyar

Pāṭal of Civavākkiyar, pp. 135-90, in *Cittar periya ñāṉakkōvai*, ed. A. Rāmanātaṉ, Ceṉṉai, 1959

Puṟanāṉūṟu ed. with commentaries by Auvai. Cu. Turaicāmi pPiḷḷai, ŚSPS, 3 vols., vol. 1: 1st ed., 1947; 2nd ed., 1952; vols. 2 and 3: 1951

Periyâḻvār-Tirumoḻi with the commentary by Maṇavāḷa Mā muṉi (on I, 1 to IV, 10) and Periyavāccāṉ Piḷḷai (on V, 1–4), = *Śrīmad-Varavara-munîndragrantha-mālā*, vol. 2, KPBA, 1969, Tamil characters

Peruṅkatai by Koṅkuvēḷir ed. with Tamil commentary by Po. Vē. Cōmacuntaraṉ, ŚSPS, nos. 1385-6; Uñcai/Ilāvāṇa: 1970; Makata/Vattava/Naravāṇa-kāṇṭam: 1st ed. 1970, 2nd ed. 1973.

o *Perumpāṇāṟṟuppaṭai*

o *Porunarāṟṟupaṭai*

Prabandham, Divya- see *Nālāyira* °

Bhagavadviṣayam see *Pakavat* °

Maṇimēkalai ed. N.M. Vēṅkaṭacāmi Nāṭṭār and Auvai. Cu. Turaicāmi pPiḷḷai, ŚSPS, 1960

o *Maturaikkāñci*

o *Malaipaṭukatām*

: *Muppattāṟāyirappaṭi* see *Īṭu*

o *Mullaippāṭṭu*

: *Mūvāyirappaṭi* (=3000) (1) commentary by Periyavāccāṉ on TPā (2) GPPV

+ *Meyviratamāṉmiyam* (=*Hastigirimāhātmyam*) of Veṅkaṭanātha, pp. 373-92 in vol. 2 of *Patiṉoru-cillarai-rahasyaṅkaḷ*, ed. A Śrīṉivāsarākavaṉ, Kumbakonam, 1937 (Grantha characters)

+ *Rahasyatrayasāram* of Veṅkaṭanātha, ed. with a Tamil commentary by Narasimmācārya-svāmikaḷ, Madras, 1920, Grantha characters **RTS**

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